



GRAMMY RECORD

American song writer Beyoncé frames history with the most Grammys of all time bagging her 32nd

LEISURE P2



RISING TENSION

Health workers in Britain begin their largest strike as thousands of them walk out in an escalating pay dispute

INTERNATIONAL P10



BARCA EXTEND LEAD

Barcelona beat Sevilla 3-0 to extend their lead on the top to 8 points over Real Madrid in Spanish football league

SPORTS P12

CJI administers oath to 5 new SC judges

New Delhi: Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud Monday administered oath of office to five new judges of the Supreme Court. The five judges -- Justices Pankaj Mithal, Sanjay Karol, PV Sanjay Kumar, Ahsanuddin Amanullah and Manoj Misra -- were administered the oath during a swearing-in ceremony held in the Supreme Court premises. With the appointment of five judges, the total number of judges in the apex court has risen to 32, two short of the full strength. Their names were recommended for elevation as apex court judges by the Supreme Court Collegium December 13, 2022. This came amid a tiff between the government and the judiciary over the process of appointing judges to the Supreme Court and the 25 high courts.

3 HUGE EARTHQUAKES IN 24 HOURS; OVER 2,600 KILLED, HUNDREDS STILL TRAPPED



Syrian civil defence members search for people under the rubble of a destroyed building in Afrin, Syria



Rescuers carry out a girl from a collapsed building following an earthquake in Diyarbakir, Turkey



People walk near a famous 13th century mosque which partially collapsed in the province of Maltaya

Killer quakes shake Turkey, Syria

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Istanbul, Feb 6: The most powerful earthquake in nearly a century struck Turkey and Syria early Monday, killing more than 2,300 people in their sleep, levelling buildings and causing tremors felt as far away as Greenland. The 7.8-magnitude night-time tremor, followed hours later by two more big ones, wiped out entire sections of major Turkish cities in a region filled with millions of people who have fled the civil war in Syria and other conflicts.

The head of Syria's National Earthquake Centre, Raed Ahmed, called it "the biggest earthquake recorded in the history of the centre". At least 968 people died in rebel and government-controlled parts of Syria, state media and medical sources said.

Another 1,651 people died in Turkey, according to Turkey's emergency services said. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, whose handling of one of the biggest disasters of his two decades in power could prove consequential to his re-election chances in polls due in May.

The initial quake was followed by more than 50 aftershocks, in-

cluding 7.5 and 6-magnitude tremors, that jolted the region in the middle of search and rescue work Monday afternoon.

AFP reporters and witnesses felt the second jolt as far apart as the Turkish capital Ankara and the Iraqi Kurdistan city of Irbil.

Shocked survivors in Turkey rushed out into the snow-covered streets in their pyjamas, watching rescuers dig through the debris of damaged homes with their hands.

"Seven members of my family are under the debris," Muhittin Orakci, a stunned survivor in Turkey's mostly Kurdish city of Diyarbakir, told AFP. "My sister and her three children are there. And also her husband, her father-in-law and her mother-in-law."

The rescue was being hampered by a winter blizzard that covered major roads in ice and snow. Officials said the quake made three major airports in the area inoperable, further complicating deliveries of vital aid.

Erdogan conveyed his sympathies and urged national unity, saying "We hope that we will get through this disaster together as soon as possible and with the least damage." **Contd...P4, MORE P10**



Rescue workers search for survivors under the debris of a collapsed building in Diyarbakir, Turkey

DEADLIEST TREMORS OF LAST 10 YRS

- AUG 14, 2021: HAITI** - A 7.2 magnitude earthquake struck southern Haiti, killing more than 2,200 people and destroying or damaging about 13,000 homes.
- SEPT 28, 2018: INDONESIA** - A 7.5 magnitude earthquake struck the island of Sulawesi, resulting in a 1.5 metre tsunami and killing more than 4,300 people.
- NOV 12, 2017: IRAN** - A magnitude 7.3 earthquake shook the eastern Kermanshah region, killing more than 400 people. At least six people died in neighbouring Iraq.
- SEPT 19, 2017: MEXICO** - A 7.1 magnitude quake hit central Mexico, killing at least 369 people and causing more devastation in the capital than any tremor since an earthquake in 1985 that killed thousands.
- AUG 24, 2016: ITALY** - A 6.2 magnitude quake struck a cluster of mountain communities east of Rome in central Italy, killing about 300 people.
- APRIL 16, 2016: ECUADOR** - A magnitude 7.8 earthquake hammered Ecuador, killing more than 650 people on the country's Pacific coast.
- OCT 26, 2015: AFGHANISTAN** - A magnitude 7.8 quake rocked the Afghan northeast, killing nearly 400 people in the country as well as in northern Pakistan.
- APR 25, 2015: NEPAL** - A magnitude 7.8 earthquake ravaged impoverished Nepal, killing nearly 9,000 people and disrupting the lives of more than eight million.
- AUG 3, 2014: CHINA** - A magnitude 6.3 earthquake devastated southwestern China, killing at least 600 people in a remote area of Yunnan province.
- SEPT 24, 2013: PAKISTAN** - Twin earthquakes, measuring 7.7 and 6.8 magnitude, rattled southwestern Balochistan province, killing at least 825 people.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



I won't invest in your company but I'll always support you on social media

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	60506.90 ↓ 334.98
NIFTY	17764.60 ↓ 89.45
DOLLAR	82.72 ↑ ₹0.89
EURO	88.83 ↑ ₹0.10
GOLD	₹56,995 ↑ ₹410
SILVER	₹ 67,643 ↑ ₹67

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP. MAX	34.2°C	31.5°C
TEMP. MIN	14.9°C	15.5°C
Humidity	77%	85%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	MAINLY CLEAR SKY	

Adani imbroglio snowballs

REUTERS

New Delhi, Feb 6: The crisis engulfing the Adani Group intensified Monday as hundreds of members of India's opposition parties took to the streets to press for a probe into allegations by a US short-seller against the conglomerate which triggered its market rout.

Shares in billionaire Gautam Adani's companies have been in free-fall since a January 24 critical report by Hindenberg Research, with group cumulative market losses now topping \$110 billion, sparking fears of wider financial contagion.

Opposition parties, who last week called for a parliamentary panel to investigate the saga and disrupted proceedings, have questioned Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's closeness with Adani.

Protesters Monday also expressed anger about investments made by



state-backed Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) and State Bank of India (SBI) in the Adani Group. Adani has rejected in detailed rebuttals the Hindenberg report's allegations of stock manipulation, use of tax havens and criticism that it had unsustainable debt.

The billionaire and Modi are from the same state and Adani has repeatedly denied allegations by

Modi's opponents that he had benefited from their close ties. Modi's government too has denied allegations of favouring Adani. At New Delhi's Jantar Mantar, a Mughal-era observatory that doubles up as a protest site for all causes, protesters held up banners and shouted slogans against Adani. Some broke through barricades, forcing the police to detain them. **Contd...P4**

SC declines to consider Odisha lawyers' apology

The bench will hear the matter April 17

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Feb 6: The Supreme Court Monday refused to consider the unconditional apology tendered by the advocates from Odisha, allegedly involved in vandalism and strikes at district courts, at current stage and said, "this contempt will hang on your head for the time being".

The apex court held that it is too early for it to consider these unconditional apologies and it will watch if the apology is coming from heart or merely an attempt to escape contempt proceedings. The bench adjourned the matter for hearing to April 17.

A two-judge bench of Justices SK Kaul and Manoj Misra, however, clarified that the apex court has not

prevented the consideration of the bail applications of the arrested advocates due to pendency of the present plea.

"We clarify that the bail applications will be considered in accordance with law as per the facts and circumstances of each case," the bench said. The apex court also expressed utter disregard to the acts of the advocates.

"All of us have been part of the Bar. But this is absolute lumpiness and hooliganism that has taken place. This contempt will hang on your head for the time being. We will not relieve you from contempt," the bench said. Meanwhile, along with the apology, the apex court asked advocates to give an undertaking that they will not indulge in such acts in future. **Contd...P4**

Mob sets beat house ablaze as man dies in Forest dept custody

15 forest officials including 2 ACFs detained by police



PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 6: An irate mob set fire to a forest beat house in Cuttack district after a villager detained by the Forest department died in its custody, an officer said Monday.

59-year-old Dhaneswar Behera, a resident of Khuntakata Satagochhia village, was picked up by Forest department officials of Athargarh area Sunday on charge of poaching a tusker and removing its tusks.

However, Dhaneswar was found dead while in Forest department custody following which irate villagers staged a road blockade at Badabasuni Chhak.

The local residents along with Behera's wife Tulasi alleged that her husband was hacked to death by forest officials. The mob also set fire to the forest beat house, police said.

Dhaneswar was picked up by forest officials while he was returning from his daughter's house Sunday night, Tulasi said.

Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (PCCF), Devidutta Biswal said a senior official of Forest department has rushed to Athargarh to probe the incident.

Stringent action will be taken if any official was found to have applied third degree on the accused inside the custody. The post-mortem report will reveal the truth, the PCCF said. **Contd...P4**

Iran singer facing prison wins Grammy for protest anthem

LYRICS OF THE SONG 'BARAYE' LISTS REASONS YOUNG IRANIANS HAVE POSTED ON TWITTER FOR WHY THEY HAD PROTESTED AGAINST IRAN'S RULING THEOCRACY

AGENCIES

Dubai, Feb 6: An Iranian singer who faces possible prison time for his song that's become an anthem to the ongoing protests shaking the Islamic Republic wept early Monday after seeing he'd won a Grammy.

Shervin Hajipour appeared stunned after hearing Jill Biden, the wife of President Joe Biden, an-

This song became the anthem of the Mahsa Amini protests, a powerful and poetic call for freedom and women's rights. Shervin was arrested, but this song continues to resonate around the world with its powerful theme: Women, life, freedom

JILL BIDEN | FIRST LADY OF THE US

nounce he'd won the Grammy's new song for social change special merit award for 'Baraye'.

An online video showed Hajipour in a darkened room, wiping tears away after the announcement.

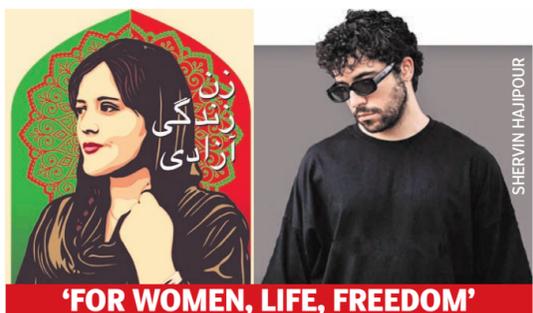
Hajipour's song 'Baraye', or 'For' in English, begins with: "For dancing in the streets, for the fear we feel when we kiss." The lyrics lists reasons young Iranians have posted on Twitter for why they

had protested against Iran's ruling theocracy.

It ends with the widely chanted slogan that has become synonymous with the protests since the September death of Iranian-Kurdish woman Masha Amini: "For women, life, freedom."

Released on his Instagram page, the song quickly went viral. Hajipour then was arrested and held for several days before being released on bail in October.

The 25-year-old singer faces charges of "propaganda against the regime" and "instigating the violence," according to Human Rights Activists in Iran, a group that's been monitoring the months long



'FOR WOMEN, LIFE, FREEDOM'

protests. Hajipour is also banned from leaving Iran. Wearing a shining, off-the-shoulder Oscar de la

Renta dress at the Grammy ceremony in Los Angeles, Biden said that a song "can unite, inspire and

ultimately change the world."

"This song became the anthem of the Mahsa Amini protests, a powerful and poetic call for freedom and women's rights," Biden said. "Shervin was arrested, but this song continues to resonate around the world with its powerful theme: Women, life, freedom." Those gathered cheered Biden's remarks. On Instagram, Hajipour simply wrote: "We won."

The singer is among over 19,600 people arrested amid the demonstrations, according to Human Rights Activists in Iran. At least 527 people have been killed amid a violent suppression of the demonstration by authorities.

leisure



REESE WITHERSPOON DIDN'T KNOW WHO DE NIRO WAS

Actress Reese Witherspoon says she didn't know who Robert De Niro was when she walked into the room for auditions for the movie *Cape Fear*. "The receptionist was like 'You know he's the most important actor of our time right?'" Reese said.

SALMA HAYEK NO LONGER FEELS DEFINED BY HER SEXUALITY

Actress Salma Hayek says she no longer feels defined by her sexuality. "I am appreciated for much more than just my beauty now as I'm in my 50s. I feel respected by those around me at this stage of my life," adds the *From Dusk till Dawn* star.



FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com
accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
Your ability to let go things will reflect in your personal as well as your professional life. Today could be a significant day for you, and Ganesh advises you not to forget your special abilities. Make good use of them so that others too can benefit.

TAURUS
This day you will be prone to be stubborn and uncompromising in your business and professional dealings and thereby inviting unnecessary problems. Ganesh advises you to guard against this tendency and conduct yourself cordially and amiably with your colleagues and clients.

GEMINI
You need to break free from the shackles of your daily routine. Trying to finish all your tasks as per your schedule will give rise to unnecessary worry. To manage your time creatively is the best way to beat the stress. Talking to your elders is a good way to calm your shot nerves, says Ganesh.

CANCER
Your social prestige will go up. People will praise your personality traits and try to emulate you. You will be a role model, too. Ganesh feels that this will be highly profitable day for you.

LEO
You will try to take up new projects to the best of your abilities today. You will be able to successfully tackle all your tasks today. You will face a little instability in your personal relationships, but will be able to solve all issues successfully, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Today you will feel monetarily much stronger than you have ever felt, says Ganesh. You will realise the need to make monetary arrangements for some unforeseen financial instability that may occur in the future. Your leadership qualities will be appreciated by people around you.

LIBRA
Ganesh says today you will use your mental competency to complete all your work on time. You may not give complete attention to your family as you will be spending time in the office or at work. Your extraordinary intelligence will be showcased at work today. Ganesh says do not forget your family which has played a huge role in your success.

SCORPIO
Be vigilant; keep your eyes and ears open for all the events happening around you, says Ganesh. Your intuition is trying to tell you something, trust it. Think and act positively, the rest would fall in place.

SAGITTARIUS
Keeping all the work aside, you may be painting the town red today. Falling in love is exciting, isn't it? However, for all those who are already in a relationship, Ganesh shows a red signal. Avoid arguments with your loved one. He suggests, Impress 'the special one' with a bouquet of red roses and make up for all the petty fights during the day.

CAPRICORN
Opportunities don't knock on the door twice. Today, you'll answer the door and utilise the opportunity to the most, predicts Ganesh. Positive results will be visible and you'll stand a chance to overtake your competitors. Even if the competition is fierce and opponents try everything to pull you down, you'll not let them win the battle. Socially, you will be very popular today.

AQUARIUS
You have changed your approach towards life from materialism to mysticism. Your friends and family members are pleasantly surprised to see this change. Later on the day, you may plan to visit a temple or other religious places, foresees Ganesh.

PISCES
You are striving hard to influence your destiny. You are not going to kneel down without a fight against heavy odds. With persistent efforts you will succeed in achieving your goals. While victory is a given, hard work will be necessary.

Grammy Awards

Record trophy haul for Beyoncé

Los Angeles: Beyoncé Giselle Knowles-Carter, an American singer, songwriter now has the most Grammy wins of all time. On Sunday night, she made history with four wins, bringing her career total to 32.

Her *Renaissance* win for best dance/electronic album put her in the history books, after also winning best R&B song for *Cuff It*, best dance/electronic recording and traditional R&B performance.

Apart from Beyoncé's accomplishment, there were no sweeps that

left any other winners guaranteed to make all the headlines. The top three all-genre categories went to three different winners, none of them the ones that were being widely prognosticated. Harry Styles picked up album of the year, Lizzo won record of the year and Bonnie Raitt got a truly unforeseen win for song of the year.

Ricky brings home his third

Los Angeles: It seems to be India's year at the global entertainment arena as after the Golden Globe and Critics' Choice Awards win of *Naatu Naatu* from the SS Rajamouli directorial *RRR*, along with Oscar nominations for *The*



Elephant Whisperers and *All That Breathes*, Indian music composer and producer Ricky Kej clinched the honour at the recently concluded Grammy Awards.

The composer picked up his career's third Grammy for *Divine Tides*, which was nominated in the Best Immersive Audio Album category. The album is a collaborative project with rock legend and Police drummer Stewart Copeland.

Sharing his happiness right after the win, Ricky posted a picture and wrote: "Super grateful, my 3rd Grammy Award."

In a statement shared with the media, the music composer said: "It feels absolutely surreal to win the biggest prize in music again for the third time. I dedicate this award to India. I'd like to thank the Recording Academy for this honour, my collaborators Stewart Copeland, Herbert Waltl, Eric Schilling, and everyone else who made this album possible."

Divine Tides is a nine-song album that aims to deliver the message that each individual's life plays a crucial role in maintaining the balance that serves all equally.

film-maker

Parineeti among India's top 75 achievers in UK

Mumbai: Actor Parineeti Chopra was named among India's top 75 young achievers in the UK and was honoured as a University of Manchester alumnus. In her acceptance speech, the actor shared that life has come full circle. Parineeti Chopra is one of four University of Manchester

alumni to have been honoured for their achievements after graduation. To celebrate 75 years of India's independence, the British Council's India/UK Together's Season of Culture recognised the work of 75 young achievers who have been educated in the UK. The actor was singled out for her achievements in the Arts, Culture & Entertainment category.

The gala ceremony to honour the 75 Achievers was held January 25. While accepting her award, Parineeti had said, "Life has come full circle and I'm so glad to be back where it all started! Having studied at Manchester Business School, to be able to come back, receive this award and celebrate it at the UK Parliament is such an incredible, special feeling."

AGENCIES

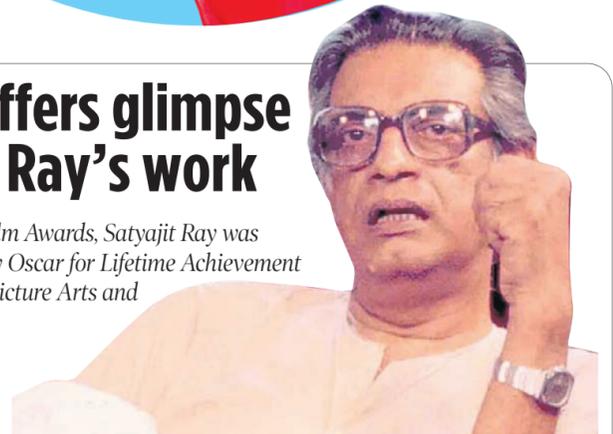


Anthology offers glimpse into Satyajit Ray's work

A recipient of 36 National Film Awards, Satyajit Ray was presented with the Honorary Oscar for Lifetime Achievement by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in 1992

Kolkata: A new anthology offers a glimpse into the fiction and non-fiction writings of legendary filmmaker and polymath Satyajit Ray. A two-volume box set, *The Best of Satyajit Ray* published by Penguin Random House India, is not only a treat for the Ray enthusiasts but also a collector's edition.

The book set picks from the ever-popular adventures of Ray's enduring creation, the professional sleuth, *Feluda*, to the chronicles of *Professor Shonku*, his short stories as well as writings on



ing, and his thoughts on world and Indian cinema.

"Satyajit Ray was a creative genius. His life, philosophy, and works have inspired millions of people across the world. While he's largely celebrated for his films, Ray's writings, music compositions and illustrations, among others, are true gems. His detective stories, science fiction, and writings on cinema and music open a window to the creative world of this Renaissance man," said Premanka Goswami, Associate Publisher & Head of Backlist, Penguin India, in a statement.

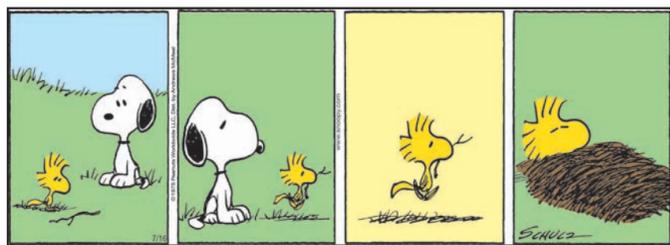
Goswami added this two-volume *The Best of Satyajit Ray*, available on online and offline stores, will help readers

conveniently fall back upon the master's writings.

Ray (1921-1992) was one of the most eminent film directors of world cinema with films like *Pathar Panchali* (Song of the Little Road, 1955) that established his position as a major film director, winning numerous awards.

A recipient of 36 National Film Awards, the filmmaker was also honoured by several national and international awards, including the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, Padma Bhushan, and the Bharat Ratna. He was presented with the Honorary Oscar for Lifetime Achievement by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) in 1992.

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

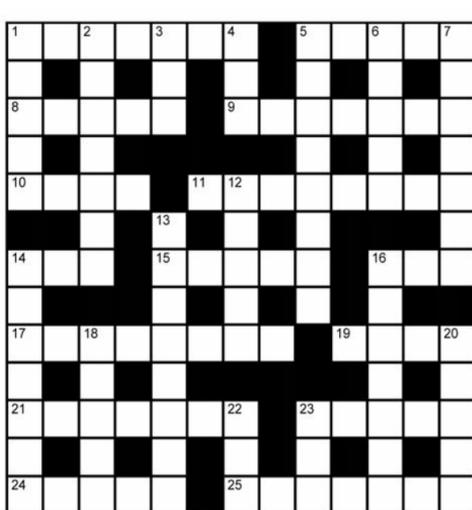


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD

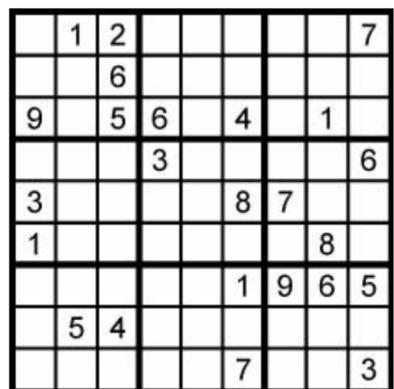


Copyright ©2023 PuzzleJunction.com

- Across**
- 1 Dung beetles
 - 5 Details
 - 8 Neck support
 - 9 Guess
 - 10 Canyon sound
 - 11 Escapes
 - 14 Writing tablet
 - 15 Common viper
 - 16 Mouth part
 - 17 Hard candy
 - 19 In between, sort of
 - 21 Apprentices
 - 23 Chef's attire
 - 24 Countrified
 - 25 Held up, so to speak
 - 6 Egyptian city
 - 7 Comes to the fore (5,2)
 - 12 Moving picture
 - 13 Wildly insane
 - 14 Pale lager
 - 16 Eel-like freshwater fish
 - 18 Pate
 - 20 Supped ingredient
 - 22 Turf
 - 23 Be in pain
- Down**
- 1 Cavalry sword
 - 2 Embarrassed
 - 3 Hatchet
 - 4 Distress call
 - 5 Biological science

SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

CM inaugurates court in Ganjam

STATE COMMITTED TO PROVIDING LEGAL SERVICES AT DOORSTEP, SAYS NAVEEN



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 6: The state government is committed to providing accessible and efficient legal services to the citizens at their doorstep, said Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik while inaugurating the Civil Judge (senior division)-cum-Assistant Sessions Judge Court in Ganjam's Hinjilicut Monday.

Patnaik, along with Orissa High Court Chief Justice S Muralidhar, inaugurated the court on a virtual platform.

"Today, a longstanding aspiration of the people of Hinjilicut has been fulfilled. This is a major step towards providing access to justice for the people of Hinjilicut. The state government is committed to providing accessible and efficient legal services to our citizens at the doorstep," Patnaik said.

The CM added, "I am sure that the people of Hinjilicut, especially the poor and weaker sections of society, will have advantage in having this legal facility closer to their homes."

The CM hoped that the lawyers of Ganjam will make use of the facility to its fullest, and reach out to the litigants to provide justice and fairness.

Speaking on the occasion from Cuttack, the Orissa High Court Chief Justice said that the HC and judiciary have been taking initiatives in order to ensure expeditious delivery of justice. The HC did not close down even during the Covid-19 pandemic, he added.

Specifying the steps, the Orissa HC Chief Justice said, opening of new courts, appointment of judicial officers, use of technology and rationalisation of cases in different courts and many other steps have been taken to improve the performance of the judicial system.

He thanked the CM and Odisha government for their relentless support towards opening new courts.

Orissa HC Justice BR Sarangi appreciated the vision of the CM in opening new courts and taking justice closer to people.

State to see rise in temperature

Bhubaneswar: Temperature is expected to rise across the state during the next two days, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said Monday. As per the weather agency, minimum temperature is very likely to rise slightly by around 2 degree Celsius during the next two days and there will be no significant changes thereafter. "Dry weather is most likely to prevail over most of the districts for the next five days," the IMD added.



BRIEF RELIEF: Workers arrange watermelons in Ashok Nagar area of Bhubaneswar, Monday, as daytime temperature rises

Life expectancy 14 yrs shorter in violent countries: Study

Life expectancy for young people can be as much as 14 years shorter in violent countries compared to peaceful nations, according to a global study.

A team, led by researchers at the University of Oxford in the UK, shows a direct link between the uncertainty of living in a violent setting and a 'double burden' of shorter and less predictable lives, even for those not directly involved in the violence.

The study, published in the journal Science Advances, estimates a gap of around 14 years in remaining life expectancy – the number of years a person can expect to live – at age 10 between the least and most violent countries.

In El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Colombia, the gap in life expectancy with high income countries is predominantly explained by excess mortality due to homicides, they said.

"What we found most striking is that lifetime uncertainty has a greater association with violence than life expectancy," said Jose Manuel Aburto from Oxford's Leverhulme Center for Demographic Science.

"Lifetime uncertainty, therefore, should not be overlooked when analysing changes in mortality patterns," said Aburto, lead author of the study.

Using mortality data from 162 countries, and the Internal Peace

30-yr-old held for ₹14L fraud

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 6: The twin city Commissionerate Police Monday arrested a 30-year-old man of Jagatsinghpur on charges of duping a person in the City here of Rs 14 lakh on the pretext of providing him a landed property.

The accused, identified as Asutosh Das of Kujanga area in Jagatsinghpur district, has been residing at Oscar City under Laxmisagar police limits here.

Police sources claimed that Das contacted Trilochan Thatoi of Bomikhal in order to help him buy a landed property in Laxmisagar area. Thatoi paid Das Rs 14 lakh, which includes Rs 5.45 in cash and Rs 8.55 through cheque, in 2019.

However, the accused neither provided the land nor returned the money to the victim. When Thatoi asked for the money, Das gave him a cheque of Rs 13 lakh which was later dishonoured by the bank for 'insufficient funds'.

With no way out, Thatoi approached the Laxmisagar police May 24, 2022. Based on the complaint, police registered a case (199/22) and launched manhunt. Das was arrested Monday.

Odisha readies for Prez's 2-day visit

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 6: The state government Monday preparedness for President Droupadi Murmu's two-day visit to the state that will begin February 10.

Chief Secretary SC Mahapatra chaired a meeting, which was attended by senior police officers and the heads of all related departments.

Security measures for her visit were discussed at length at the meeting, Commissioner of Police of Bhubaneswar-Cuttack Soumendra Priyadarsi said.

The President is scheduled to attend two programmes in Bhubaneswar and one event in Cuttack. She is also slated to visit the Lingaraj Temple in the state capital on the morning of February 11, he said.

While the CISF will look after the security of the President during her arrival and departure at the airport, the Odisha Police will make arrangements during her programmes in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, he added.



Noted painter Bansidhar Pratihari, along with other awardees and dignitaries including Odia Language, Literature and Culture Minister Aswini Kumar Patra and Odisha Lalit Kala Akademi president Sudarsan Patnaik, poses for a photo-op after receiving the prestigious Dharmapada award for 2022 at Sanskruti Bhawan in Bhubaneswar Monday

Pratihari receives Dharmapada award

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 6: Eminent painter Bansidhar Pratihari, 94, received the prestigious Dharmapada award for 2022 at a programme organised at Sanskruti Bhawan here Monday.

Renowned sculptor and painter Brajabandhu Mishra, palm leaf artist Laxmidhar

Subudhi, traditional pattachitra artist Bhramarbara Nayak, painter Ramesh Behera and stone artist Keshab Chandra Moharana were felicitated with special awards carrying a cash prize of Rs 1 lakh, a citation, a copper plaque and a shawl each. Seven artists were also given the Charukala award.

Dharmapada award, which car-

ries a cash prize of Rs 5 lakh, is the highest award given by the state government to an individual for lifetime achievement and contribution to the enrichment of visual and sculpture art since 1987.

While presenting the awards, Odia Language, Literature and Culture Minister Ashwini Kumar Patra said that these artists have made the state proud with their works.

Born in Kendrapara in 1929, Pratihari studied arts at Shantiniketan. He worked for thirty years as a designer at Upendra Maharathi Shilp Anusandhan Sansthan in Patna and retired in 1988.

He has received accolades from many prestigious organisations such as the Odisha Lalit Kala Akademi.

ECoR sets record in freight loading

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 6: East Coast Railway (ECoR) has set a new record by loading 200.43 million tonne of freight from its jurisdiction in just 310 days of the current financial year 2022-23. In 2021-22, ECoR had achieved similar figures in 320 days, followed by 360 days in 2020-21 and 366 Days in 2019-20 fiscals.

ECoR has also earned Rs 20,635 crore from freight during the above period in 2022-23 as against Rs 19,204 crore in last financial year, with an increase of 7.5 per cent.

"ECoR achieved this milestone despite many challenges and adverse effect faced during loading and train operations. Surpassing the 200 MT loading has been achieved due to focus on innovative steps and key interventions by Railway ministry which helped to get it onto the fast-track," said a railway official.

During the period, ECoR carried 126.18 MT of coal, 20.22 MT of iron ore, 18.16 MT of other materials, 15.74 MT of finished steel, 6.27 MT of raw materials to steel plants, 5.11 MT of fertilizer, 3.17 MT in container, 2.37 MT of min-

eral oil, 2.13 MT of food grains and 1.09 MT of cement. Khurda Road Division has carried 129.93 MT of freight during the period. Similarly, Waltair Division has carried 57.03 MT and Sambalpur Division has carried 13.47 MT of freight during the period.

East Coast Railway general manager Manoj Sharma gave credit for this achievement to its hard-working and dedicated staff in all of its three divisions, while mentioning the efforts and cooperation from all stakeholders including collieries, ports, steel plants, cement, alumina plants, petroleum companies, and the Food Corporation of India.

Muscular dystrophy-hit kids, parents take to streets

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 6: Children suffering from Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD), a rare disease, and their parents under the banner of Odisha Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy Association (ODMDA) Monday staged a protest at Lower PMG here to press for fulfilment of their seven-point charter of demands.

Sources said ODMDA has been independently working towards identifying the children suffering from DMD in the state.

"We've so far identified over 50 such children in Odisha. We're trying to bring all of them under one roof and raise a combined demand in order to receive some sort of help as we are fighting a losing battle," said ODMDA president Bishnu Charan Panigrahi.

Panigrahi said the outfit has



DMD-hit children with their parents at Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar, Monday

been demanding provision of treatment for DMD-affected children/adolescents, appropriate physiotherapy centres for these kids at PHC/CHC/DHH level, electric wheelchair for the affected children and provision of one-time grant of Rs 15 lakh to the family of the DMD children, including those who have lost their children. They

are also urging the state government a monthly assistance of Rs 15,000 to each family, free genetic test of children showing the symptoms and pre-natal DMD test and insurance scheme for DMD children.

Later in the day a delegation of ODMDA met Health Services director Bijay Mahapatra and handed him a memorandum addressed to

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik in this regard. The Health Services director assured the delegation to look into the demands. "We'll look into the demands. However, let's wait for the High Court hearing in this relation February 8," Mahapatra said.

DMD is the most common and fatal type of muscular dystrophy, marked by progressive muscle degeneration and weakness due to alterations of a protein called 'dystrophin' that helps keep muscle cells intact. The condition is predominantly seen in boys, but in rare cases, it can also affect girls. The current therapeutic options available to treat DMD are minimal and highly expensive treatment with costs shooting up to ₹2 crore per child a year and are mostly imported from abroad, accelerating costing costs and putting them out of reach for most families.

Bombs hurled at hotel, staff

Bhubaneswar: Miscreants, including a bus owner, hurled hand-made bombs at a hotel at the new bus stand in Baramunda area here late Sunday night. Police has started an investigation into the matter by registering a case (60/23) on the basis of complaint lodged by hotel owner, Niranjan Patra. As per the complaint, the accused bus owner along with his friend came to the hotel to have their dinner Sunday evening at around 10 pm. Meanwhile, the accused engaged in heated argument with the hotel staff and Patra's brother over some food items and dues pending for the last several months. The issue was subsequently sorted out following the intervention of locals.



Index between 2008-2017, the study shows the most violent countries are also those with the highest life-time uncertainty.

Vets seek enactment of law against perpetrators



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 6: To prevent violence against veterinary doctors of the state, members of Odisha Veterinary Service Association (OVSA) Monday voiced their demand for introduction of a Veterinary Health Care Act which will ensure proper action against the perpetrators.

In recent years, increasing patient load, demand for quality treatment, infrastructure inadequacy and acute vacancy in Animal Resource Development department have made veterinary doctors vulnerable to public assault throughout the state. In a situation, February 2, 2023, a lady doctor Sailendri Gupta of Jaleswar was put in the lock-up while on duty over death of a goat which had already been mishandled by quacks before being brought to her.

They also demanded parity with medical doctors in OMHS cadre, establishment of a Veterinary Science University, and one veterinary dispensary per 10 to 12 gram panchayats

"Animal owners rightfully expect proper treatment whereas our authorities keep us engaged in distribution of subsidies, unnecessary meetings and activities like selling of tractors and reapers. Further in absence of fixed working hours and well defined job charts, veterinary doctors become an easy target for the aggrieved people," said a member of

the central executive committee.

The government is launching schemes and programmes like 'Animal Help Line' without assessing field conditions like manpower, for which the doctors are facing difficulties in implementing them, added another member.

The OVSA also demanded reformation in the old service system at the Animal Resource department and transformation of the veterinary service delivery system, with provisions made for complete parity of veterinarians with medical doctors in OMHS cadre, establishment of a Veterinary Science University, and one veterinary dispensary for each 10 to 12 GPs.

"In absence of prompt and positive intervention, the veterinary doctors of the state, who are already working wearing black badges as a symbol of silent protest, will abstain from doing extra works assigned to them like door step services, working beyond traditional hospital hours from February 16," said OVSA president Jadunath Parida.

"We are also considering remaining in mass leave in future if our demands get unfulfilled, which will bring hardships for the animal owners of the state and hamper the undergoing developmental schemes of the department," added OVSA vice-president Sankarsan Mahunta.



ANTI-ENCROACHMENT DRIVE: An excavator deployed by BDA demolishing unauthorised encroachments at GGP Colony in Bhubaneswar, Monday

OP PHOTO

ISA delegation visits CSIR-IMMT



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 6: International Seabed Authority (ISA) secretary general Michael William Lodge visited Monday CSIR-Institute of Minerals and Materials Technology (CSIR-IMMT) here with an ISA delegation comprising Marie Bourrel McKinnon, chief of staff and head of strategic planning unit, Jose Dallo Moros, director, Sonakshi Mishra, program management officer, and Madhumita Kothari, senior advisor, coordinated by Sandip Kumar Mukhopadhyay scientist, Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES).

ISA and MoES exchanged polymetallic nodules (PMN) exploration extension contract February 1 in the presence of Union minister Jitendra Singh, minister of State (independent charge) Earth

Sciences and secretary M Ravichandran. This contract was initially signed March 25 2002 for a period of 15 years, which later was extended twice for 5 years period, during 2017 and 2022.

"Polymetallic nodules present in the deep sea floor contain metals copper, nickel, cobalt and manganese, which are essential for India's growth, particularly electric vehicles as India does not have any exploitable land based ores. In 2021, the MoES launched the Deep Ocean Mission to support the development of its blue economy," said a ministry official.

The secretary general and the ISA delegation visited various departments at the institute. G Narahari Sastry, director, CSIR-IMMT explained that the institute is also understanding potentials, opportunities and possibilities.

Seminar on Hindi organised by BoM

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Feb 6: An All India Hindi Seminar on 'Digital Banking and Languages' was organized by Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) for all the banks, financial institutions and insurance companies across the country at New Delhi. Anshuli Arya, IAS, Secretary, Department of Official Language, Ministry of Home Affairs was present as the chief guest on the occasion. AS Rajeev, Managing Director & CEO, BoM presided over the function. K Rajesh Kumar, General Manager, HRM and Rajbhasha, Head Office and Chitra Datar, General Manager and Zonal Head, Delhi Zone were among the guests. Sudhir Shyam, Economic Advisor, Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance was present as a special guest.

He enlightened the participants



in regard to digitalization in banking. Arya, in her address, said that the banks and financial institutions are the backbone of economy. She added that the use of Hindi and regional languages in digital banking is very important in present scenario and customers from remote areas will be benefited by the use of their native languages. She appreciated the efforts being made by BoM and other banks in this direction.

Chit fund: HC refuses to quash FIR against Jena

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cuttack, Feb 6: The Orissa High Court Monday refused to quash the FIR and chargesheet of the CBI, in which former BJD MP Rabintra Jena's name figured in the multicore Seashore chit fund scam.

Jena had approached the High Court in February last year praying for an order to delete his name from the FIR and the chargesheet.

Adjudicating his petition, Justice BP Routray concluded hearing in the case December 12 last year and reserved the verdict.

Delivering the judgment during the day, Justice Routray relied on the arguments made by the CBI advocate that the former Balasore MP and several other political leaders had allegedly taken money from Seashore Group chief Prashant Dash in order to provide him political patronage. The CBI probe team has alleged that Rs 1.75 crore was transferred to Jena's personal account from the Seashore Group.

The CBI advocate also argued that the transferred amount was not a loan as Jena was not authorised to receive any loan from the Seashore Group of Companies.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit before Notary Public, Bhubaneswar On 20.01.2023. I have changed my name Smita Rani Baliarsingh to Smita Baliarsingh. Therefore I shall be known as Smita Baliarsingh for all purpose.

By virtue of an affidavit before Executive Magistrate, Cuttack, I Pradip Kumar Nayak, S/o. Late Rasananda Nayak, At/Po- Safa, Tangi, Dist-Cuttack do hereby state that in LIC Policy my name has been mentioned as Pradeep Nayak. Hence Pradip Kumar Nayak and Pradeep Nayak is same and one person for all purpose.

Coding will enhance students' skills: Bagchi

Bhubaneswar: A three-day training programme on coding and tinkering for teachers, commenced here Monday. Organised by Mo School, the training programme is intended to empower teachers in making teaching-learning mechanism interactive and engaging and aid in the transmission of 21st-century skills. Susmita Bagchi, Chairperson, Mo School graced the inaugural ceremony and laid importance on manoeuvring coding practices by teachers in everyday classroom transaction. Under the 'Students' Aspirational Programme' of Mo School, coding and tinkering sessions are being encouraged extensively in the transformed high schools to enable the optimum utilisation of students' potentials. For the successful implementation of this initiative, Mo School has been working tirelessly in collaboration with national and international non-profit organisations. Bagchi addressing the meeting opined, "With the application of coding practices in classrooms, students are sure to develop their excellence in arithmetic reasoning and enhance their computational thinking."



Continued from P1

Killer quakes shake Turkey, Syria

COLLAPSED HOMES IN SYRIA

The first quake struck at 04:17am at a depth of about 17.9 kilometres near the Turkish city of Gaziantep, which is home to around two million people, the US Geological Survey said. The Danish geological institute said the quake tremors were felt as far away as Greenland. Osama Abdel Hamid, a quake survivor Syria, said his family was sleeping the when shaking began.

"I woke up my wife and my children and we ran towards the door," he said. "We opened it and suddenly all the building collapsed." A spokesman for Syria's civil defence said teams were scrambling to rescue trapped people. "Many buildings in different cities and villages in northwestern Syria collapsed... Even now, many families are under the rubble," said Ismail Alabdallah, Washington, the European Union, and Russian all immediately sent condolences and offers of help. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy offered to provide "the necessary assistance" to Turkey, whose combat drones are helping Kyiv fight the Russian invasion.

'PEOPLE UNDER RUBBLE'

Images on Turkish television showed rescuers digging through rubble across city centres and residential neighbourhoods of almost all the big cities running along the border with Syria.

Some of the heaviest devastation occurred near the quake's epicentre between Kahramanmaraş and Gaziantep, where entire city blocks lay in ruins under the gathering snow. Kahramanmaraş Governor Omer Faruk Coskun said it was too early to estimate the death count because so many buildings were destroyed.

"It is not possible to give the number of dead and injured at the moment because so many buildings have been destroyed," Coskun said. "The damage is serious." A famous mosque dating back to the 13th century partially collapsed in the province of Maltaya,

where a 14-story building with 28 apartments housed 92 people also collapsed. In other cities, social media posts showed a 2,200-year-old hilltop castle built by Roman armies in Gaziantep lying in ruins, its walls partially turned to rubble. "We hear voices here - and over there, too," one rescuer was overheard as saying on NTV television in front of a flattened building in the city of Diyarbakir.

"There may be 200 people under the rubble."

POWER OUTAGES

The Syrian health ministry reported damage across the provinces of Aleppo, Latakia, Hama and Tartus, where Russia is leasing a naval facility.

AFP correspondents in northern Syria said terrified residents ran out of their homes after the ground shook. Even before the tragedy, buildings in Aleppo, Syria's pre-war commercial hub, often collapsed due to the dilapidated infrastructure, which has suffered from lack of war-time oversight.

Naci Gorur, an earthquake expert with Turkey's Academy of Sciences, urged local officials to immediately check the region's dams for cracks to avert potentially catastrophic flooding. Officials cut off natural gas and power supplies across the region as a precaution, also closing schools for two weeks. "The size of the aftershocks, which may continue for days although mostly decreasing in energy, brings a risk of collapse of structures already weakened by the earlier events," David Rothery, an earthquake expert at the Open University in Britain. "This makes search and rescue efforts dangerous." Turkey is in one of the world's most active earthquake zones.

The Turkish region of Duzce suffered a 7.4-magnitude earthquake in 1999, when more than 17,000 people died -including about 1,000 in Istanbul.

Experts have long warned a large quake could devastate Istanbul, a megalopolis of 16 million people filled with rickety homes.

The last 7.8-magnitude tremor shook Turkey in 1939, when 33,000 died in the eastern Erzincan province.

SC refuses to consider Odisha lawyers'...

During the hearing, senior advocate Vikas Singh submitted in the court that the advocates have been in jail for 58 days and have been beaten by the police. Bar Council of India Chairman Manan Mishra also argued that there are women advocates and advocates around 75 years old inside the jail. He requested the court to consider the plea.

The bench, however, remained firm on its stance and refused to consider the plea at the current stage. The bench observed that it still doesn't believe that the advocates have realised and the apology may be due to the tough stand of the court. The bench said it is not closing the proceedings and will watch the advocates behave.

"On a lighter note there is a saying, 'you fool me once shame on you, you fool me twice shame on me'," the bench said. Significantly, the apex court also noted that apparently a large-scale allocation has been made for technical upgradation of judicial institutions in the Budget. "We expect all judicial forums, tribunals, district courts and High Courts to utilise the technical infrastructure available to the best of their ability," the bench said.

In January, the Supreme Court had issued contempt notices to 191 advocates for their alleged involvement in agitation, picketing and vandalism during the protests for Orissa High Court bench in western Odisha. Earlier in December last year, the apex court had asked the police to take stringent action against the advocates involved in vandalism and disruption of court work during the strike for establishment of HC bench in western Odisha.

Mob sets beat house on fire as man dies...

Meanwhile, 15 forest officials including two assistant conservators of forest (ACFs) were detained by police following Behera's death. They have been detained at Athargarh police station.

Forest officials January 31 had recovered a carcass of an elephant with tusks missing in Hipinda Reserve forest under Badamba range. Dhaneswar was picked up on suspicion of being a poacher, forest officials said, adding, that he, however, died in the custody. The Forest department agreed to pay Rs 4.79 lakh compensation to the family of the deceased and a job for his son. The police have deployed three platoons of force as tension prevailed in the area, said SDPO, Athargarh, Bijay Bisi.

Adani imbroglio...

"Common man has invested his money in a businessman's (Gautam Adani) company and the government is trying to save him. The government is supporting the businessman (Adani) and not the common man," Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee General Secretary Shiv Pandey was quoted as saying.

Hundreds of members of the Congress party protested across the country, including outside several offices of state-owned insurer Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) and State Bank of India (SBI), both of which have exposure to Adani group companies. At Jantar Mantar some burnt a suitcase with an SBI logo on it. In Mumbai, a protester held a placard with Adani's photo and the LIC logo, explaining with a bar chart "How much has LIC invested in Adani Group". LIC holds a 4.23% stake in the flagship Adani firm, while its other exposures include a 9.14% stake in Adani Ports and 5.96% in Adani Total Gas. SBI said last week its total exposure to Adani Group was 0.9% of its total loan book, or around 270 billion rupees (\$3.30 billion).

LIC and SBI did not respond to a request for comment.

Separately, a move by Adani Group Monday to calm investor nerves failed to stem the market rout. It said it would prepay loans of around \$1.1 billion taken against pledged stocks in Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone, Adani Transmission and Adani Green Energy, allowing it to get back the shares. Shares of Adani Enterprises closed down 0.9% Monday after sinking as much as 9.6% in

early trade. Adani Transmission dropped lost 10%, while Adani Green, Adani Total Gas Ltd, Adani Power, and Adani Wilmar fell 5% each. Adani Ports rose 9.3%, the only stock to buck the trend.

WORSENING CRISIS

The crisis has snowballed into the biggest business and reputational challenge for 60-year-old Adani, whose fortunes had rapidly risen in recent years as he expanded his conglomerate's business interests that stretch from ports to mining. Both houses of India's parliament were adjourned on Monday the third consecutive day, amid sloganeering and demands to launch an inquiry.

In the brutal fallout of Hindenburg's report, Adani group flagship company Adani Enterprises Ltd was forced to abandon a \$2.5 billion share sale last week, and Adani lost his crown as Asia's richest person and slipped down the global rankings of the wealthy. Adani had planned to issue a credit report by Friday to address concerns raised by Hindenburg about its liquidity, Reuters reported. The report is expected to be released this week, said a source with direct knowledge of the matter.

The stock market rout triggered a series of credit ratings warnings Friday with Moody's saying the group may struggle to raise capital, and S&P cutting its outlook on two group companies.

India's banking and markets regulators, as well as the government, have initiated inquiries to calm spooked investors. The latter has written to various custodian banks asking for details on beneficial owners of offshore funds and foreign portfolio investors (FPIs), Reuters reported.

FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech-Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri-Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Rayfair Lagoon-Cookieman-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

Piped drinking water, a distant dream for Jajpur district residents

Over ₹1,000 crore spent on 8 mega projects that are still not operational



POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, Feb 6: Over 90 per cent of the residents in Jajpur district are yet to get hygienic piped drinking water supply directly to their homes as eight sanctioned mega projects are yet to become operational, sources said Monday.

As a result at many places residents still have to depend on tube wells to meet their water requirements. However, many of the tube wells produce contaminated water with huge iron content. In many places, tube wells also do not function. The situation is more critical in industrial and mining areas of the district where the groundwater is high in iron content. As a result, people are getting afflicted with kidney diseases.

partment added that work on some more projects is underway. However, the fact is that over ₹1,000 crore has so far been spent on the projects, but they are still not fully operational.

YOUTH GETS 10-YR RI FOR RAPING MINOR

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Feb 6: A fast track court here Monday, sentenced a youth to 10-years of rigorous imprisonment after convicting him for impregnating a 17-year old minor on the pretext of marriage. The youth was identified as Khageshwar Patra, 29, a resident under Turumunga police limits in this district. Fast track judge Manas Kumar Mishra also slapped a penalty of ₹10,000 on Patra, apart from the prison sentence. If he fails to pay, Patra will have to undergo an additional year in prison, the judge observed while delivering the order.



According to the case diary, Patra lured the minor and entered into a physical relationship with her and raped her over a period of time on the pretext of marriage. When the girl became pregnant, Patra terminated her pregnancy. He even threatened her with dire consequences if she disclosed the matter before others.

Theft racket in Phulbani busted, police arrest 5

POST NEWS NETWORK

Phulbani: Police busted Monday a racket, allegedly involved in the theft of electrical appliances including some from government properties. Five people have been arrested in this connection, said a senior police official here. The mastermind of the racket is Sagar Biswal, a resident of Salepur in Cuttack district. The others arrested are Mungulu Pradhan of Gurujoga village, Alok Muni of Majuriga village, Niranjan Kanhar of Pikana village and Maheswar Behera of Lambabadi village, police said. Police have also seized from the accused computers, television sets, a generator, a xerox machine and a Swift Desire vehicle which was used to transport the stolen items, police said.

Call for Covishield ban gains momentum

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 6: A number of Indian medical experts supported Monday calls from an eminent British Indian cardiologist for a full safety review into the use of the OxfordAstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccine, administered in India as Covishield, over feared serious side effects such as heart attacks and stroke.

Covishield, carries a double whammy of risk. It has serious side-effects like blood clots and also can cause myocarditis

lion doses. Peer reviewed research published in June 2021 revealed that according to 'pharmacovigilance' data, the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine had a worse safety profile for serious adverse effects in comparison to Pfizer's mRNA vaccine for heart attack, stroke and death in both younger and older adults, Dr Malhotra stated.



Dr Aseem Malhotra, a National Health Service (NHS) trained medic who has had two doses of the Covid-19 vaccine, is already leading international calls for the suspension of OxfordAstraZeneca's Covid vaccine after publishing peer reviewed research last year to warn that the harms could outweigh the benefits for a majority of people. He will be delivering a series of lectures across India on Covid-19 vaccines to try and make an evidence-based case for their suspension.

EAST COAST RAILWAY

E-AUCTION OF PARKING STAND

STATION & LOCATION :
1) Brahmapur - 4 Wheeler (in front of Entry / Exit of Platform-1), 2) Kaluparaghat - 2 Wheeler (near OH Water Tank at Platform-1 side), 3) Delang - 2 Wheeler (near Station Building), 4) Baitarani Road - 2 Wheeler (near Circulating Area), 5) Tomka - 2 Wheeler (at Platform-1 side), 6) Talcher Road - 2 Wheeler (near Circulating Area), 7) Mancheswar - 2 Wheeler (near Station Building), 8) Patia PH - 2 Wheeler (at platform-1 side), 9) Kendujhar - Mix (2 Wheeler-cum-4 Wheeler) (at Platform-1 side), 10) Cuttack - Mix (2 Wheeler-cum-4 Wheeler) (at Platform-1 side), 11) Jajpur Keonjhar Road - Mix (2 Wheeler-cum-4 Wheeler) (near platform-1), 12) Dhenkanal - Mix (2 Wheeler-cum-4 Wheeler) (near RPF office), 13) Bhadrak - Mix (2 Wheeler-cum-4 Wheeler) (at platform-1 side).

Auction Start Date & Time : 15.02.2023 at 11:00 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 01 to 13).
Auction End Date : 15.02.2023 (for Sl. No. 01 to 13) & End Time : at 11:30 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 01), 11:40 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 02), 11:50 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 03), 12:00 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 04), 12:10 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 05), 12:20 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 06), 12:30 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 07), 12:40 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 08), 12:50 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 09), 1:00 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 10), 1:10 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 11), 1:20 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 12), 1:30 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 13).

E-AUCTION OF PAY & USE TOILETS

STATION & LOCATION : 1) Talcher (MCL siding end), 2) Dhenkanal (on Platform-1 at Sadashibpur end), 3) Paradeep (adjacent to Platform-1 near Goods Office), 4) Ganjam (middle of Platform-1), 5) Jajpur Keonjhar Road (on Platform-1, Howrah end), 6) Keonjhar (on Platform-1, Naranpur end), 7) Chatrapur (on Platform-3 & 4, Brahmapur end), 8) Balugaon (on Platform-1, at Visakhapatnam end), 9) Ichhapuram (middle of Platform-1), 10) Bhadrak (on Platform-1 & 2, middle), 11) Angul (on Platform-1, Talcher Road end), 12) Brahmapur (on Platform-1, Visakhapatnam end), 13) Dhanmandal (outside Platform-1, at Cuttack end).

Auction Start Date & Time : 15.02.2023 at 15:00 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 01 to 13).
Auction End Date : 15.02.2023 (for Sl. No. 01 to 13) & End Time : at 15:30 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 01), 15:40 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 02), 15:50 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 03), 16:00 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 04), 16:10 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 05), 16:20 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 06), 16:30 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 07), 16:40 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 08), 16:50 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 09), 17:00 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 10), 17:10 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 11), 17:20 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 12), 17:30 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 13).

E-AUCTION OF PAY & USE AC WAITING HALL

STATION & LOCATION : 1) Patara (at New Station Building), 2) Khurda Road (at New Station Building).

Auction Start Date & Time : 17.02.2023 at 11:00 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 01 and 02).
Auction End Date : 17.02.2023 (for Sl. No. 01 and 02) & End Time : at 11:30 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 01), 11:40 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 02).

Note : Prospective bidders are advised to visit the website : <https://www.irreps.gov.in> and check the upcoming e-auctions leasing tab to get all required information regarding this e-auction.

Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager / Khurda Road
PR-967/N/22-23

PONZI FRAUD: 5-YEAR JAIL TO FIRM OWNER

MISHRA LURED PEOPLE WITH ATTRACTIVE DEPOSIT SCHEMES AND SAID THAT THE AMOUNT WILL DOUBLE IN FOUR YEARS AND INCREASE FOUR TIMES IN SEVEN YEARS



POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasure, Feb 6: A chit fund court here Monday sentenced Jagadish Mishra, the proprietor of ponzi firm, Raj Godson Pvt Ltd, to five years in prison after convicting him in a case of fraud amounting to ₹38.25 lakh. Mishra was also slapped with a penalty of ₹3.81 lakh. If he fails to pay the fine, Mishra will have to spend another two-and-a-half years in prison, Judge Biswajit Das

observed while delivering the order. According to the case diary, Mishra opened a branch office of Raj Godson Pvt Ltd at Malikashpur locality in this town in 2010. He had stated that the head office of the firm was at Niladri Vihar in Bhubaneswar. Later on he also opened offices in Bhadrak and Mayurbhanj districts.

depositors that he will provide developed plots in this town and on the outskirts of Balasure and raised crores. He however, failed to return back the money to the depositors following which a number of them lodged complaints at the Town police station here. Subsequently Mishra was arrested by the police. The court examined 49 documents and the statements of 17 witnesses before passing the order. Special Public Prosecutor Pranab Kumar Panda pleaded the matter on behalf of the Odisha government.

5 poachers held from Similipal

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, Feb 6: Acting on a tip-off, Forest department officials arrested Monday five poachers during a raid at Paikabasa village under Baripada Sadar police limits in Mayurbhanj district. The accused were identified as Sunaram Barik of Paikabasa village, Budhiram Singh and Jiten Shyam Singh of Lalganj village under Baripada Sadar police limits, Sundar Mohan of Karakachia village under Rairangpur Sadar police limits and Rama Bindhari of Purunapani village under Betanoti police limits.



The skeletal remains of a dead elephant and other wild animals, a tortoise shell, two country-made guns and two mobile phones were seized from their possession. The raid was led by deputy director (South) of Similipal Tiger Reserve and the divisional forest officer of Baripada. The raid took place when the poachers were trying to sell the illegal products.

REGIONAL OFFICE: BALASORE

MANIKHAMB, OT ROAD, POLICE LINE, BHASKARGANJ, DIST.: BALASORE, PIN-756001, Email: crld.robalasure@unionbankofindia.bank, Mob.: 8249176744

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE/MOVABLE PROPERTIES

(E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002).

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Movable/Immovable properties mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive/symbolic/physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Union Bank of India (Secured Creditor), will be sold on "As is where is" and "As is What is" and "Whatever there is" basis on 23.02.2023, for recovery of dues as mentioned hereunder to Union Bank of India from the below mentioned Borrower(s) & Guarantor(s). The Reserve Price and the Earnest Money Deposit are also mentioned hereunder.

BALASORE BRANCH-2,
Dist.: Balasure, Ph. No.: 06782-263530, Email: ubin0810223@unionbankofindia.bank

Name & Address of Borrowers / Guarantor:	Amount Due
Borrowers: 1) M/s. Sindhujema Agarbati Works, Prop.: Mr. Narayan Prasad Shaw, At: Kalidaspur, P.O.: Haripur, Via: Motiganj, Balasure-756003, 2) Mr. Narayan Prasad Shaw, At: Kalidaspur, P.O.: Haripur, Via: Motiganj, Balasure-756003 / Guarantor: Mrs. Subhadra Shaw, W/O: Mr. Narayan Prasad Shaw, At: Kalidaspur, P.O.: Haripur, Via: Motiganj, Balasure-756003	₹ 36,90,331.39 as on 04.11.2019 with further interest, Cost and expenses

Property No.1: All that part and parcel of the property consisting of Immovable property being Land & Building admeasuring Area: Ac. 0.110 Dec and Ac.0.190 Dec., **Total Area: Ac.0.300 dec.**, situated in Plot No.: 277 & 278, Khata No.: 157/86, situated at Jhatigudua, Gobindapur, Khantapada, Kuligaon Road, Balasure held in the names of **Mr. Narayan Prasad Shaw**, Bounded by North : Plot No.: 560 & 561, South: Road, East: Purna Ch. Behera, West: Srinath Dutta and Immovable property being Residential Land and Building, admeasuring Area: Ac. 0.040Dec. situated at Plot No.: 275, Khata No.: 157/100, situated at Jhatigudua, Gobindapur, Khantapada, Kuligaon Road, Balasure, held in the name **Mr. Narayan Prasad Shaw**, Bounded by East: Purnachandra Behera, West: Srinath Dutta, North: Plot No.: 560 & 561, South: Road
Type of Possession: Symbolic / Reserve Price: ₹44,17,200/- / Earnest Money to be deposited: ₹4,41,720/-

BHADRAK BRANCH-2,
Dist.: Bhadrak, Ph. No.: 06784-241120, Email: ubin0818127@unionbankofindia.bank

Name & Address of Borrower / Co-obligant:	Amount Due
Borrower: M/s. R K Chemicals, Prop.: Mr. Ratnakar Mallick, At: Taragana, P.O.: Ichhapur, Dist.: Bhadrak, PIN-756100, Proprietor: Mr. Ratnakar Mallick, At: Taragana, P.O.: Ichhapur, Dist.: Bhadrak, PIN-756100 / Co-obligant: Mrs. Tulasi Mallick, W/o: Mr. Ratnakar Mallick, At: Taragana, P.O.: Ichhapur, Dist.: Bhadrak, PIN-756100	₹ 54,71,947.96 as on 27.09.2021 with further interest, Cost and expenses

Property No.2: Land and Building - Rural Homestead Land, Factory shed and Residential Building thereon over Plot No.: 315 under Khata No.: 757/277 in an area of Ac.0.600 dec i.e 26,136 sq.ft in the name of **Mrs. Tulasi Mallick** at Mouza: Taragana, P.O.: Ichhapur, P.S.: Bhadrak(R), Dist.: Bhadrak, Odisha, PIN-756100, Bounded by North: Ramamani Mallick, South: Water Canal, East: Road, West: Canal
Type of Possession: Symbolic / Reserve Price: ₹1,83,40,500/- / Earnest Money to be deposited: ₹18,34,050/-

Name & Address of Borrowers/Co-Aplicants/Guarantors:	Amount Due
Borrowers: 1) Binayak Nursing Homes Pvt. Ltd., Prop.: Srikanta Sahoo, At: Sainita, P.O.: Gopalpur, Via: Chandabali, Bhadrak-756133, 2) Dr. Mukhtikanta Sahoo, S/o: Indramani Sahoo, C/o: Binayak Nursing Home, At: Sainita, P.O.: Gopalpur, Via: Chandabali, Bhadrak-756133 / Co-Aplicants/Guarantors: 1) Mr. Ratikanta Sahoo, S/o: Indramani Sahoo, At: Sainita, P.O.: Gopalpur, Via: Chandabali, Bhadrak, 2) Mrs. Saraswati Sahoo, W/o: Mani Charan Sahoo, At: Bareipur, P.O.: Chandabali, Bhadrak-756133, 3) Mrs. Padmabati Sahoo, W/o: Mr. Pitabash Sahoo, At: Bhatapada, P.O.: Chandabali, Bhadrak-756133	₹ 3,88,52,654.95 as on 31.03.2021 with further interest, Cost and expenses

Property No.3: Vacant land situated at Khata No.: 170/72, Plot No.: 367, Area: Ac.0.60 dec., at Mouza: Sanoastia, P.O.: Gopalpur, Chandabali, Bhadrak in the name of **Srikanta Sahoo, Ratikanta Sahoo, Mukhtikanta Sahoo, Padmabati Sahoo, Saraswati Sahoo**, All are S/o and D/o Late Indramani Sahoo, Bounded by East: Vacant Land, West: Plot of Sukhdev Sahoo, North: Pani Nala & Road, South: Plot of B Sahoo.
Type of Possession: Symbolic / Reserve Price: ₹1,20,00,000/- / Earnest Money to be deposited: ₹12,00,000/-

BHADRAK BRANCH - 3, DIST.: BHADRAK - 756100,
Ph. No.: 8917493248, Email: ubin0933562@unionbankofindia.bank

Name & Address of Borrower/Guarantors:	Amount Due
Borrower: M/s. N C Sen, Prop.: Nabin Chandra Sen, S/o: Narendra Chandra Sen, At: Kacheri Bazar, Near Bonth Square, Bhadrak / Guarantors: 1) Shri Pradip Kumar Sen, S/o: Shri Nabin Chandra Sen, At: Kacheri Bazar, Near Bonth Square, Bhadrak, 2) Shri Nirmal Chandra Sen, S/o: Shri Narendra Chandra Sen, At: Puruna Bazar, Bhadrak, 3) Smt. Ajodhya Sen, W/o: Shri Nirmal Chandra Sen, At: Bajetol, Bhadrak	₹ 56,43,696/- as on 30.04.2021 with further interest, Cost and expenses

Property No.4: Open Homestead Land in the name of **Shri Pradip Kumar Sen**, S/o: Nabin Chandra Sen, Khata No.: 258/248, Plot No.: 603/1053, at Mouza: Baincha, P.S. No.: 50, Tahasil: Chandabali, Measuring an Area: Ac.1.07 dec. & Plot No.: 605/1054, Measuring an Area: Ac.0.13 dec., Bounded by North & South Side: Plot of Sidheswar Mandal, East Side: Plot No.: 606, 607 & 605 and West Side: Plot No.: 605, Kissan: Homestead & Open Homestead Land in the name of **Shri Pradip Kumar Sen**, S/o: Shri Nabin Chandra Sen, Khata No.: 72/43, Plot No.: 210/276 at Mouza: Bijipur, Tahasil: Chandabali, Measuring an Area: Ac.1.10 dec., Bounded by South Side: Plot of Sidheswar Mandal, North Side: Plot of Sidheswar Mandal, East Side: Plot No.: 603/1053 and 605, West Side: Dhamara Road.
Type of Possession: Symbolic / Reserve Price: ₹1,59,39,000/- / Earnest Money to be deposited: ₹15,93,900/-

UDALA BRANCH - 2,
Dist.: Mayurbhanj, Ph. No.: 06795-232004, Email: ubin0825549@unionbankofindia.bank

Name & Address of Borrower/Guarantor:	Amount Due
Borrower: M/s. Himanshu Jewellery Shop, Prop.: Mr. Himanshu Sekhar Behera, Cinema Hall Road, Udala, Dist.: Mayurbhanj-757041 / Guarantor: Mrs. Chandramani Behera, W/o: Dasaratha Behera, At: Khuntapal, P.O.: Sanbiswal, P.S.: Udala, Dist.: Mayurbhanj-757041	₹ 11,84,909/- as on 03.03.2020 with further interest, Cost and expenses

Property No.5: All that part of the property consisting of Immovable Property of Residential Land and Building in the name of **Mrs. Chandramani Behera** over Plot No.: 106/1378, Khata No.: 354/66, Area: Ac.0.070Dec., Kissan: Gharabari, situated at Cinema Hall Road, Udala, Mouza: Khuntapal, PS No.: 130, Dist.: Mayurbhanj-757041, Odisha, Bounded by North: Road, South: Road, East: Land of R K Behera, West: Land of P Behera
Type of Possession: Symbolic / Reserve Price: ₹13,00,000/- / Earnest Money to be deposited: ₹1,30,000/-

JAJPUR ROAD BRANCH-2,
Dist.: Jajpur, Ph. No.: 06766-253783, Email: ubin0802751@unionbankofindia.bank

Name & Address of Borrower/Co-Aplicants/Guarantors:	Amount Due
Borrower: Badajena Iron and Steel Industries Pvt. Ltd., Rep. by it's Director: Mr. Ranjit Kumar Badajena / Co-Aplicants/Guarantors: 1) Mr. Ranjit Kumar Badajena, S/o: Prafulla Kumar Jena, 2) Mrs. Aiswarika Badajena, W/o: Ranjit Kumar Badajena, All are at Plot No.: HIG-165, Kanan Vihar, Phase-1, Patia, Bhubaneswar, Dist.: Khurda	₹ 2,68,95,508/- as on 03.10.2019 with further interest, Cost and expenses

Property No.6: Land and Building - Residential belonging to **Ranjit Kumar Badajena (Owner of the Property)**, situated at Semi Urban Residential Land & Building, Area: Ac.1.63dec. at Mouza: Mangarajpur, P.S.: Byasanagar, Dist.: Jajpur, Khata No.: 199/69, Plot No.: 18, Area: Ac.0.140Dec., Plot No.: 34/975, Area: Ac.0.030Dec. & Plot No.: 33/974, Area: Ac.0.130Dec., Khata No.: 113, Plot No.: 11, Area: Ac.0.080Dec., Plot No.: 14, Area: Ac.0.040Dec., Plot No.: 25, Area: Ac.0.040Dec., Plot No.: 29, Area: Ac.0.060Dec., Plot No.: 30, Area: Ac.0.490Dec., Plot No.: 38, Area: Ac.0.080Dec. & Plot No.: 42, Area: Ac.0.300Dec., Khata No.: 199/72, Plot No.: 10, Area: Ac.0.060Dec., Plot No.: 15, Area: Ac.0.030Dec. & Plot No.:32, Area: Ac.0.060Dec., Khata No.: 160, Plot No.: 31, Area: Ac.0.090Dec. and Bounded by East: NH-215, West: Self, Ranjit Badajena, Pabitra Rout & Govt. Land, North: Bhaskar Mallick, Tilottma Mallick, Raghu Mallick, Sara Mallick, Krushna Chandra Swain, Pond Embankment, South: Sankarshan Behera, Bhaskar Mallick
Type of Possession: Symbolic / Reserve Price: ₹2,15,90,100/- / Earnest Money to be deposited: ₹21,59,010/-

BID INCREMENT AMOUNT FOR EACH PROPERTY : ₹10,000/-
DATE & TIME OF E-AUCTION : 23.02.2023 between 01:00 P.M. to 05:00 P.M.
(with 10 minutes unlimited auto extension), e-Auction Website : www.mstcecommerce.com
LAST DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF EMD : On or before the commencement of E-Auction
For Registration and Login and Bidding Rules visit:
<https://www.mstcecommerce.com/aucactionhome/ibapi/index.jsp>
For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in <https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in/english/tenderviewallaucaction.aspx>

Place : Balasure, Date: 06.02.2023
Sd/- Authorized Officer, Union Bank of India

FOCUS ADANI CRASH

SOME EARLY LESSONS



No doubt that the Adani group will do its utmost to bounce back, but regulators and policymakers must ensure that investors' trust in the markets is not dented

contribution to improving the "information" content in the market. There are many instances when short sellers have been "squeezed" because they sold much more than was available and had to make up by buying at huge premia, and ultimately got wiped out. The responsibility of ensuring everyone obeys the law is up to the watchdog - SEBI. Some countries just have outright bans on short selling. But that is like banning all negative feedback about any company.

The fourth thing is about the circularity of index funds and the Sensex. The latter is just an average of 30 stocks. If one or two of those large stocks is zooming it can take the Sensex higher, even if all the other stocks are declining. This forces index funds which passively mimic the Sensex into pouring more funds of retail investors into those very stocks which zoom further. This circularity can be dangerous and cause instability, eventually possibly sharp drops. So the exchanges and SEBI must be very careful about how the index stocks are selected. In 2022 the NASDAQ which has 100 stocks was down 34%, S&P with 500 stocks in the index was down 20%, but Indian indices were up 5%. Some of this is due to India's resilient economy no doubt.

Lastly, stock market sentiment follows herd mentality. Hence a big fall spooks many potentially small investors (and vice versa), and reactions can be wild, affecting the whole market. This is an externality, a spillover effect. No doubt that the Adani group will do its utmost to bounce back, but regulators and policymakers must ensure that investors' trust in the markets is not dented. India's stock markets are world leaders in terms of technology and surveillance systems. The regulators and exchanges must match that in terms of excellent governance and strengthening the foundation of trust.

The writer is a noted economist.
©THE BILLION PRESS

The sudden and steep crash in Adani group stocks took away some of the glow of the Union Budget news headlines. The total loss of wealth in market capitalisation was a staggering 100 plus billion dollars (Rs 9 lakh crore) between January 24 and February 3. This is one-fifth the size of the Union Budget presented by the finance minister. The fall is across nine companies ranging from green energy, ports, power, and cement, all connected with India's infrastructure. The fall was almost 50%, which means half the value is still retained. Infrastructure is a crucial and structural determinant of India's growth story. And for the next two decades it will be a powerful engine, so long as enough money is poured into building infra, be it from public or private sources. Any company industry or business exposed to India's infrastructure building cannot but be profitable. Yet the dramatic fall in Adani stocks has many lessons for investors, policymakers, and most importantly for regulators.

First to note is that when stocks fall, the headlines say, "there is a wave of selloff." As if everyone is just selling the stock. But remember that in an exchange not even a single share can be sold unless there is a buyer. For every Adani stock that was sold during this fateful week, there was a buyer on the other side. Yes, the price was falling. But if you say there was a wave of selling, then surely there was also a wave of buying. Who were these buyers? Were they short sellers, who had sold in advance the shares that they did not own (this is the modus operandi of short sellers), and were buying and mopping up shares in a falling market to deliver it to their counterparties? This is for the regulators to investigate, although per se there is nothing illegal in bargain buying a stock which is falling like stone.

The second thing to note is prices fall or rise steeply even with a few transactions in an illiquid asset. This week newspapers reported the distress sale of 28 flats in central Mumbai for Rs 1238 crore, all bought by members of a family. The implied price is between Rs 65,000 to Rs 75,000 per square foot. Has it fallen sharply from Rs 90,000 that prevailed not too long ago? In a market with thousands of luxury flats, the illiquidity impact, means that the sale of a mere dozen flats can move the price steeply affecting the value of all those thousand flats which have no transactions to show. The same is true of the stock market. If the market is "liquid" with plenty of buyer and seller interest at all times, the transaction volume cannot move the price so suddenly and steeply. That is why for stocks listed on stock exchanges the regulator Securities and Exchanges Board of India (SEBI) insists on a "public float" of at least 25% to be held widely, diffused, across many, preferably small investors. So that for any seller there is likely to be a buyer who has an opposing view about that stock. Thus, price sentiments have pressure from both sides. In the Adani stock carnage, surely if one party was selling there should have been an opposing sentiment, much more bullish on the India infrastruc-

ture story. The problem was with inadequate liquidity. This is where the stock became vulnerable for a steep fall. The lesson for SEBI and the exchanges is to keep a strict watch on adequate liquidity and strict adherence of public float in letter and spirit. In the absence of liquidity, the price can move sharply in both directions. And hence the price to earnings ratio (P/E) can zoom like anything. Last year at the time of its initial public offering, the new age company Nykaa's market value (and hence P/E ratio) zoomed into the stratosphere. This despite the profits being meagre. Such P/E ratios, especially those that rise suddenly, are difficult to justify, let alone understand. The third thing to note is that short selling in Indian capital markets, be they stocks or bonds is very hard. In stocks, the short seller must borrow shares in advance before short selling. No "naked short selling" is allowed. The price for borrowing shares can be quite steep depending on the volatility of the stock. Of course, Indian shares or bonds listed abroad can be short sold in those markets, but Indian regulators can't do much about that. Short sellers take great risks and bet large amounts and make a useful



Ajit Ranade

FOR EVERY ADANI STOCK THAT WAS SOLD DURING THIS FATEFUL WEEK, THERE WAS A BUYER ON THE OTHER SIDE

Balloon Riddle

There is nothing small in God's eyes; let there be nothing small in thine.

SRI AUROBINDO



The billion dollar question is what the real motive of China could be behind sending its balloon over the United States that was subsequently punctured by a US aircraft fired missile, causing a diplomatic imbroglio of sorts. The US accusation that the balloon was being used for espionage in an area where it has three nuclear missile silo fields appears as unconvincing as China's claim that it was a civilian vessel that had unexpectedly drifted off course and its mission was mere collection of meteorological data. Both the United States and China have, for decades, used surveillance satellites to keep an eye on each other from up above. Why then did China float a balloon for performing same task at huge risks of being easily caught? The balloon hovered in American airspace for a few days. The US administration had full knowledge, but it kept it under wraps till common citizens of the area spotted it. The latter of course had no idea about the nature of the "moon like" object that the balloon resembled. It was for all to see and some even conjectured whether it was an UFO (Unidentified Flying Object). Defence and technological experts in the US are scratching their heads to unravel, without any success so far, China's design in flying the balloon. The explanation offered by former White House national security adviser John Bolton typifies the responses. Bolton said, "In a way, it is more amateurish. Do the cameras in their (China's) satellites not have high enough resolution that they have to send a balloon over?"

A US balloon technologist's explanation sounds more plausible. According to him, the weather conditions at this time of winter and the wind speed at that altitude rule out the possibility of using balloons for spying on US strategic installations. In fact, it would be naive to think that China had not factored in the possibility of the balloon being shot down and cameras, radar, communication equipment supposedly attached to it recovered by the US to show the culpability of China to the whole world. This is the reason why China is continuing to stoutly deny the espionage charge even after the US is in the process of retrieving the debris from the waters.

Another explanation could be that China tried to test the US' capability of response in the event of violation of its airspace. The balloon was ideally suited for the purpose without risking any serious engagement as the payload could be harmless. If that is so, China has accomplished its mission by seemingly controlling its balloon from a remote place as it hovered in US sky for about a week, moving from one place to another, foxing the US defence establishment and forcing it to wait till it moved to a place above the sea.

The question is why the balloon appeared when US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was to visit China to try to normalise frosty Sino-US relations. China's President Xi Jinping had been personally keen on the visit as he and President Joe Biden had prepared the groundwork for it during their recent meeting in Bali.

The answer seems to be that Xi desperately wanted to refurbish his image among the Chinese populace after nothing short of a rebellion broke out in protest against his zero-COVID policy, lockdown and economic decline. He was forced to scrap the policy. It appears his best bait to regain his popularity was to project a hawkish image of himself before his people by taking on the US without risking war or any bloody confrontation. For this sacrificing Blinken's visit seems to be too small a price since in any case the trip would have at the most created an atmosphere of goodwill and thaw in the two countries' relationship. This could be done at any point of time. But, the international publicity the balloon incident gave to Xi-led China's ability to invade US' supposedly inviolable airspace has undoubtedly enhanced Xi's strong man image. China's rage over the shooting down of the balloon and threat to take further actions seems to be part of a prepared script.

It could be said the US did succeed in puncturing the Chinese balloon but China has punctured the US' reputation of water tight guarding its airspace. The Biden administration has already drawn flak from its opponents in the country, while the rest of the world is wondering how vulnerable the US is in the face of Chinese aggression. That appears to be the upshot of the balloon episode.

WISDOM CORNER

- If you only have a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail. **ABRAHAM MASLOW**
- Anything's possible if you've got enough nerve. **JK ROWLING**
- There is no way to happiness - happiness is the way. **THICH NHAT HANH**

WORDSWORTH

Franglais

The British humorist Miles Kington died on 30 January 2008. While working for Punch magazine in the 1970s, he wrote a regular weekly column, Let's Parler Franglais!, short pieces pretending to be a course in basic French ("Teach yourself dans dix minutes. C'est un walk-over."); these were published as a series of books from 1979 on. (He also produced a Latin Tourist Phrase Book that included such gems of mistranslation as ad hoc, wine not included, and ex cathedra, ruined church.) Though his is the name most closely associated with Franglais in the UK, he didn't invent it. It was created in French in 1959 as a blend of Français and Anglais. It referred to the dilution of the purity of the French language through the uncontrolled introduction of such Americanisms (or what were considered to be Americanisms — we British were excused) as le weekend, le melting-pot, le snack-bar and le striptease. It first appeared in Parlez-vous Franglais!, by Professor René Étienne, then professor of comparative languages at the Sorbonne. "The French language is a treasure," he wrote. "To violate it is a crime." In English, under the influence of writers such as Miles Kington, Franglais came instead to mean the macaronic mangling of the languages for humorous purposes. However, the genre, if we can dignify it by that name, goes back a lot further. Surtees had fun with it in Jorrocks's Jaunts and Jollities (1838): "Oui, Monsieur, cinq fois," repeated the Countess, telling the number off on her fingers — "Café at nine of the matin, déjeuner à la fourchette at onze o'clock, diner at cinq heure, café at six hour, and souper at neuf hour."

LOL

Too much speeding

A police officer in a small town stopped a motorist who was speeding down Main Street. "But, officer," the man began, "I can explain." "Just be quiet," snapped the officer. "I'm going to let you cool your heels in jail until the chief gets back." "But, officer, I just wanted to say."



"And I said to keep quiet! You're going to jail!" A few hours later the officer looked in on his prisoner and said, "Lucky for you that the chief's at his daughter's wedding. He'll be in a good mood when he gets back." "Don't count on it," answered the fellow in the cell. "I'm the groom."

SPECTRUM SECURITY

What deterrence would look like

Japan's response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and to the "strategic partnership" that Russia and China announced shortly beforehand, has been impressively decisive. The government's proposal for a near-doubling of the country's defence budget over the next five years demonstrates political realism and practical determination. The key question now is how to spend the money.

In its new National Security Strategy and National Defence Strategy, Japan acknowledges that it must continue to work with allies — especially the US, with which it has had a security treaty since 1951 — if it is to defend itself and help maintain peace in the region. But these documents also offer something new. The government has publicly stated its determination to take the leading role in Japan's self-defence, and to deter others from attempting "unilateral changes to the status quo."

This commitment to deterrence is the most important task that Japan has set for itself. But it is also the most difficult. It means deterring an attack — conventional or nuclear — by North Korea. It means deterring aggression by Russia. But most of all, it means deterring moves by China against either Taiwan or Japan's strategically located Nansei Islands nearby.

Everyone knows that by "unilateral changes to the status quo," the document is referring primarily to a Chinese invasion or blockade of Taiwan. Japanese PM Fumio Kishida raised the same issue at the June 2022 IISS Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, where he memorably warned in his keynote address that "Ukraine today could be East Asia tomorrow."

Japan's new defence build-up also reflects the sober recognition that the country may not always be able to rely on American protection (nuclear or otherwise). That would be especially true if Japan did not in the future make a significant contribution to the broader shared task of deterring China, Russia, and North Korea. That is why the new strategy includes an eye-catching mention of acquiring and building "counterstrike capabilities," meaning a force of missiles that potential adversaries understand can be used to retaliate swiftly or even to carry out pre-emptive strikes. Speed and power are the two principal characteristics of such a counterstrike capability. Top-quality intelligence, whether gathered alone or in collaboration with the US, will also be crucial in establishing the credibility of deterrence, because only then can the power of a counterstrike capability be used at the necessary speed. And building

a credible counterstrike capability will be vitally important in improving Japan's ability to deter its potential adversaries to the north and west — Russia and North Korea.

But the adversary to the south, China, presents a more difficult challenge. In recent years, Japan has been much clearer in signaling its opposition to "unilateral changes to the status quo" concerning Taiwan and the East China Sea. It has also made clear that its self-defence forces would support US forces in the case of conflict with China. But, again, deterrence in these theaters depends on Japan developing a credibly fast and powerful response capability. To that end, Japan must not only modernise and expand its maritime, land, and air defence forces; it also must change how they are deployed. Although the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force — what others call the navy — and the large, well-armed Japan Coast Guard fleet do operate throughout the country's huge territorial waters, neither they nor the army or air force has any significant base or supply depot in the southern Nansei Islands near Taiwan.

Without such bases, it does not really matter how powerful Japanese forces become, because it will still be too difficult to deploy them rapidly to the most likely conflict zones; and, crucially, it will

be impossible to convey to Chinese strategists that Japan is indeed capable of a rapid mobilisation. The potential to contribute to a military engagement only weeks or even months after the fact is unlikely to have a serious deterrent effect.

Joint use of US bases, both on the main island of Honshu and on the southern island of Okinawa, could help. But the biggest contribution would come from China knowing that any attempted invasion or coercion of Taiwan would be met by a powerful military response from nearby Japanese forces. That means establishing proper military bases in the southernmost islands.

Again, this will not be easy. The political sensitivities around Tokyo-based rule are as acute in these southern islands as they are farther north in Okinawa. Supplying such bases and making them suitable for long-term, year-round occupation will be costly. Yet this will be the real test of Japan's new defence strategy over the next five years and beyond. Are Japanese capabilities sufficient to change Chinese military planners' risk calculations? That, in the end, is what deterrence requires.

The writer is a former editor-in-chief of The Economist.
©PROJECT SYNDICATE



Bill Emmott

ARE JAPANESE CAPABILITIES SUFFICIENT TO CHANGE CHINESE MILITARY PLANNERS' RISK CALCULATIONS? THAT, IN THE END, IS WHAT DETERRENCE REQUIRES

Rail link to Konark

Sir, Konark is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Its architectural marvel is unique in the world. Visitors and tourists in hordes throng to this site to view its majestic beauty and splendid grandeur throughout the year. However, it is distressing to know that there is no railway connectivity to the famous site either from Bhubaneswar or Puri. Every year the railway budget is presented but no one thinks about connecting Konark with rail network. Railway connectivity to Konark from Bhubaneswar and Puri will increase the inflow of tourists to the heritage site and the Chandrabhaga beach. In the absence of rail connectivity tourists visit Konark by buses and cars. Rail connectivity to Konark remains a long standing demand of tourists. The ball is now in the Railway Ministry's court.

Prabhudutt Dash, BHUBANESWAR

Kargil mastermind

Sir, This refers to "Pakistan's ex-military ruler Musharraf dies," Orissa POST, Feb 6. The mastermind behind the 1999 Kargil War and former Pakistan President Gen Parvez Musharraf died in UAE during exile. A veteran of the 1965 and 1971 Indo-Pak wars, Musharraf intended to turn the tables on India and establish himself as Pakistan's supremo; instead, his country suffered another humiliating defeat — for the second time in less than three decades after the debacle that led to the creation of Bangladesh. The Kargil disaster, however, did not dampen Musharraf's ambition. In October 1999, he deposed the then PM Nawaz Sharif in a bloodless coup and installed himself as the Chief Executive of Pakistan. He took over as the President in June 2001; barely six months later, India-Pak ties hit a new low as the Indian Parliament was rocked by a terror attack. For the better part of his presidency, Musharraf doubled as the Army Chief, thus holding the reins of power firmly in his hands. In a brazen bid to prolong his tenure, he suspended the Constitution and declared a state of emergency in November 2007. Subsequently, a series of reversals — including electoral losses and the awarding of death sentence (later annulled) in a high treason case — ensured that he never returned to power. He was virtually reduced to a nonentity in his final years, with India remembering him more for the wrong reasons than the right ones.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

OrissaPOST

B-15, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

national

of the day quote

To protect our constitution, which lays the foundation of India as a secular democratic country, I will fight till my last breath. Let us fight hunger, let us fight poverty, let us fight injustice and inequality

MAMATA BANERJEE | BENGAL CM

The Congress has given you andhakaar (darkness), but we (BJP) have given you adhikaar (rights). The Left Front and the Congress used to do corruption and now both are together, but nobody can level allegation of a single scam against the BJP

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

75 years after Independence, we should have, by now, developed the capacity to attract youth from across globe to study in India rather than our youth having to go abroad. Sad that our youth have to go to countries like Ukraine to study medicine? India can become no 1 destination for education

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

CBI arrests 3 in bribe case

New Delhi: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Monday arrested three persons including two officials of Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) and a contractor in connection with a bribe case, an official said, adding that the probe agency also recovered ₹1.02 crore in cash. The arrested individuals were identified as Santosh Kumar -- senior section engineer at Railways, a resident of Assam's Silchar; Saijan Kumar, a contractor of a private company based in Guwahati; and Rampal, a deputy chief engineer with Railways.

UDF launches stir in Assembly

Thiruvananthapuram: The Congress-led UDF in Kerala Monday intensified its protest outside and inside the state Assembly against the Kerala government's budget proposals to impose cess on petrol and diesel prices. Amplifying the agitation in opposition to the "anti-people" policy of the government, United Democratic Front (UDF) MLAs Shafi Parambil, Mathew Kuzhalnadan, Najeeb Kanthapuram and C R Mahesh staged a sit-in protest at the entrance of the state Assembly.

Chandy hospitalised

Thiruvananthapuram: Former Kerala Chief Minister Oommen Chandy was Monday admitted to a hospital near here for high fever. His son Chandy Oommen said the senior Congress leader was diagnosed with pneumonia and he has been admitted to a private hospital in nearby Neyyattinkara.

Man stoned to death

New Delhi: A 23-year-old man was stoned to death in Delhi's Dwarka area, the police said Monday, adding they have identified the suspects. The deceased has been identified as Buntay a.k.a. Vicky, a resident of Gopal Nagar in Najafgarh.

Houses set on fire

Patna: Over a dozen houses were set on fire following the death of a youth in Bihar's Saran district Monday. The victim, Amitesh Kumar and two of his friends were brutally assaulted by Vijay Yadav, the husband of a village head, Sunday in Mubarakpur. Yadav and his aides carried out the attack after he suspected the three to have allegedly fired at him February 2.



Let them (BJP) face the next elections and they will figure out where they stand
NITISH KUMAR | BIHAR CM

DIARRHOEA UNDER CONTROL

The diarrhoea outbreak at 57 villages in Nadaun subdivision of Himachal Pradesh's Hamirpur district has been brought under control and no fresh case was reported in the past two days, officials said Monday. Active cases stand at 10, including two patients admitted in hospital, Chief Medical Officer (Hamirpur) Dr RK Agnihotri said



Protests against crackdown on child marriages in Assam

The crackdown has faced criticism from the Opposition, and demonstrations at various places by the affected families



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Families point to faulty data in ID cards

As more and more young men find themselves behind bars with the Assam government continuing its crackdown on child marriage, their wives are running from pillar to post to find documents to prove they were not underage at the time of wedlock. Many affected families also claimed that identity documents with "erroneous" birth dates of women were cited by police for registering cases.

people were apprehended in Dhubri district, followed by 149 in Nagaon and 139 each in Baksa, Biswanath and Hojai.

Dhubri registered the highest number of FIRs against child marriages at 382 cases, followed by Hojai (255) and Kokrajhar (209).

The opposition spoke against child marriage, but they raised concerns about the police action and urged judicial intervention.

Assam Trinamool Congress president Ripun Bora wrote to Gauhati High Court Chief Justice and sought his intervention against the "gross abuse of law" and urged him to "restrain" the state government from "such inhuman and unlawful activities".

Assam Congress chief Bhupen Kumar Borah told PTI: "Earlier, our government had passed the law against child marriage. But the BJP government is misusing the law for their political gain. It has created a panic throughout the state."

Addressing a press conference, Rajjor Dal chief and MLA Akhil Gogoi said if someone tries to "terrorise people" on the pretext of operation against child marriage, it cannot be tolerated.

Guwahati, Feb 6: Amid protests in many parts of Assam and a teenage's suicide, the number of those arrested in the state-wide crackdown on child marriages went up to 2,442, forcing Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma to come up with a justification for the drive.

Opposition parties also lashed out at the BJP-led government, terming the arrests of teenage husbands and family members as "abuse of law" for political gain and equating the police action with "errorising people". A 17-year-old girl allegedly died by suicide in Assam's Cachar district after her family prevented her from going ahead with wedding plans with her lover, police said Monday.

She had prepared to elope with her lover, but the family came to know about it and prevented her. However, Sarma justified the crackdown, pointing out that nearly 17 per cent of over 6.2 lakh pregnant women in Assam last year were teenagers. Citing data from the Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) portal, the chief minister said

1,04,264 women or 16.79 per cent of the expecting mothers, were in the age group of 19 years or less.

With the large number of household heads, in many cases the sole bread earners, being arrested, protests were staged in different parts of the state with wives, children and family members coming out on the street. Women protested in a dozen police stations in Dhubri, Morigaon, Nagaon, Cachar, Karimganj and Majuli districts. Police officials asked them to leave and women constables had a hard time clearing the premises.

"Our menfolk have been taken away by the police, leaving us without anyone to look after or to provide food for us," said Reshma Khatun, one of those protesting at Dhubri. An elderly resident of Bhuragaon in Morigaon district claimed that most of the child marriage cases were registered based on data collected from local health workers, who keep track of pregnant women, lactating mothers and families with small children to ensure coverage of government schemes. Till Monday evening, 151

No application fees for Haj pilgrims this year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 6: There will be 25 embarkation points for Haj-2023 and forms for going on the pilgrimage will be out very soon with the application being available free of cost, according to the Ministry for Minority Affairs.

The ministry said the Haj policy released on Monday will bring financial relief to pilgrims. Haj package costs have been reduced by approximately ₹50,000 as the money that was deposited with the Haj Committee for foreign exchange and items such as umbrella, bags and bed sheets would not be charged and these things can be arranged by the pilgrims themselves, sources said. The new Haj policy stated that out of the total number of quota allocated to the government of India, 80 per cent will be allocated to the Haj Committee of India and the remaining 20 per cent will be allocated to private operators.

"Those who have performed Haj earlier through Haj Committee of India will not be eligible to apply. In the case of 'Mehram' (companion) for lady pilgrims and of companions accompanying pilgrims over 70 years of age, repeaters will be allowed on payment of additional charges as applicable from time to time," the policy stated.

Woman pilgrims and those over 70 years utilising the service of a repeater as "Mehram" must give a solemn declaration and undertaking to the effect that no first time "Mehram" is available in the family. The Haj application forms can be obtained from state and Union Territory Haj committees free of cost or can be downloaded from the website of the Haj Committee of India at hajcommittee.gov.in or through the android mobile application "HAJ COMMITTEE OF INDIA" available on play store.

Earlier, the form used to cost ₹300 irrespective of whether one is selected or not

Now, the forms would be free and processing fee would be charged only from those who are selected

Woman pilgrims and those over 70 years utilising the service of a repeater as "Mehram" must give a solemn declaration and undertaking to the effect that no first time "Mehram" is available in the family. The Haj application forms can be obtained from state and Union Territory Haj committees free of cost or can be downloaded from the website of the Haj Committee of India at hajcommittee.gov.in or through the android mobile application "HAJ COMMITTEE OF INDIA" available on play store.

Woman pilgrims and those over 70 years utilising the service of a repeater as "Mehram" must give a solemn declaration and undertaking to the effect that no first time "Mehram" is available in the family. The Haj application forms can be obtained from state and Union Territory Haj committees free of cost or can be downloaded from the website of the Haj Committee of India at hajcommittee.gov.in or through the android mobile application "HAJ COMMITTEE OF INDIA" available on play store.

India, Canada eyeing bilateral trade pact

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 6: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar Monday held wide-ranging talks with his visiting Canadian counterpart Melanie Joly focusing on boosting cooperation in a range of areas, including trade, security and mobility of students.

In their strategic dialogue, the two sides also looked forward to the proposed Early Progress Trade Agreement (EPTA), according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

The two foreign ministers also exchanged views on the global situation, especially in Ukraine and the Indo-Pacific.

The MEA said it was a "meaningful" dialogue in which both sides "strengthened their commitment to deepen bilateral ties". Joly began her two-day visit to India this morning.

"Good discussions today with FM @melaniejoly of Canada. Deliberated on deepening our bilateral partnership, focusing on trade, investment, mobility, education and security. Recognized the centrality of people to people ties to the expansion of our cooperation," Jaishankar tweeted.

The external affairs minister also appreciated Canada's support to India's G20 Presidency. The MEA said both the ministers reviewed the progress in bilateral relations, which, it said, are "anchored in shared democratic values, growing economic linkages, security cooperation, mobility of students and professionals, and strong people-to-people ties". The MEA said India welcomed the announcement of Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy, given the shared vision of a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific.

In an address at a think-tank ahead of her talks with Jaishankar, Joly said India's growing strategic, economic and demographic importance makes it a critical partner for Canada in the Indo-Pacific.

'India-Russia ties are under some stress'



In his address at a conference, Russian Ambassador to India Denis Alipov accused the US of "actively" exploiting the "contradictions" between India and China to its advantage

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 6: Russia Monday said its ties with India are under some "stress" due to the current tectonic geo-political shifts in view of the "arrogant" approach of the US-led West on the Ukraine conflict including its sanction regime against Moscow that caused disruptions in financial and logistics mechanisms.

Alipov also asserted that Moscow will maintain the levels of exports including petroleum products to India notwithstanding the Western price cap on Russian crude oil.

The ambassador said Russia wants to further diversify its relations with India and that bilateral ties are not aimed against anyone but are for meeting the core aspirations of the two nations. "Today, however, our ties are under stress as we face tectonic geo-political shifts that have been underway for quite some time, but accelerated last year by crossing the red lines in Europe; not by us, but by the so-called col-

lective West led by the US, (which is) by far the most arrogant and belligerent," he said. Explaining his comments, Alipov said the western sanctions have disrupted the transaction and logistics mechanisms.

"When I spoke about stress, I specifically meant economic relations. The sanctions that interfered... They disrupted the transaction mechanisms and the logistics mechanisms," he said.

"On all these issues, both sides are in very close dialogue. They are very precise and concrete suggestions and a very professional exchange of ideas and proposals from both sides," he said. On bilateral trade and Western sanctions, he said the Rupee-Rouble mechanism has been established for economic engagement.

"The Vostro accounts have been opened. The mechanism for Rupee-Rouble trade has been established. It is now a matter for the banks to use it," he said.

Alipov said the Indian banks are "over-cautious" to use this Rupee-Rouble mechanism, though it is not going to invite any restrictions from the US. "But that's the fear. The banks would like to be on the safe side. It will take some more time for the knowledge that it is not at all detrimental to the Indian banking system," he added.

The envoy said Moscow wants to expand its economic engagement with Islamabad as a "weak" Pakistan is not good for the entire region including India.



In a major milestone, the Naval variant of the indigenous Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) undertook maiden landing onboard the country's first Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC) INS Vikrant

Political parties urge govt to stop anti-encroachment drive in JK

The Peoples Democratic Party chief appealed to Opposition leaders in the country not to be a mute spectator to the "atrocities being committed by the BJP"

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar/New Delhi, Feb 6: Political parties in Jammu and Kashmir Monday hit out at the Lieutenant Governor's administration over the anti-encroachment drive, with PDP president Mehbooba Mufti accusing the BJP government of turning the union territory into Afghanistan by "demolishing the homes of poor and marginalised".

Former Chief Minister and National Conference leader Omar Abdullah said he was against people encroaching upon State land, but the administration should follow the due process of law.

Peoples Conference president

Sajad Lone slammed the government, alleging it was more interested in humiliating the people than retrieving land.

Mehbooba, addressing a press conference in the national capital, alleged the BJP is using its brute majority to "weaponise" everything and "bulldoze" the Constitution.

Mehbooba said that according to the government, even the centuries-old Shankaracharya Temple and cantonment built by the erstwhile Maharaja are also on encroached land.

The PDP leader said Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha might claim that the houses of the poor will not be touched during the anti-encroachment drive, but his message is not being heard on the



ground as dwellings, even with tin sheds, are being demolished.

"Parties including the Congress, Left, DMK, TMC, Samajwadi Party and others should raise their voices and not remain silent to the atrocities (being committed) on common people in Jammu and Kashmir," she said. In Srinagar, Abdullah said the administration should halt the anti-encroachment drive and allow the people to prove their claims over the properties.

Abdullah said the government should devise a scheme to allow the regularisation of the illegal occupancies like in other parts of the country, including Delhi.

Lone, a former minister in the PDP-BJP coalition government, said Jammu and Kashmir is part

of India and should be treated at par with the rest of the country.

The People's Conference president said the lieutenant governor and a few officers, who do not even belong to Jammu and Kashmir, cannot take decisions on behalf of the people of JK.

Meanwhile, the Congress held protests against the eviction drive in Jammu, Srinagar and several other places in the union territory.

The protestors in Jammu slammed the administration over the ongoing "arbitrary eviction" drive in the Union territory, saying it was great injustice with "landless tillers, small, marginal farmers and the common people".

DMK celebrates Bharat Jodo Yatra success

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Feb 6: The successful completion of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra covering 4,080 km and traversing the country on foot has energised the Congress at the grassroots level.

Rahul Gandhi, who was mocked by the ruling party as 'Pappu' and a person with unpredictable moods who was not serious about politics, tried to reinvent himself by walking through the country and meeting people, braving the adverse weather and terrain.

While Rahul has completed the journey successfully, one person who has rejoiced most in the success of the yatra is Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin who inaugurated the Yatra at the southern tip of the country in Kanyakumari on September 7, 2022, by handing over the national flag to Rahul Gandhi.

Though the Yatra passed through Tamil Nadu for only four days, it was welcomed in an overwhelming manner by the DMK and its allies of the Secular Progressive Alliance (SPA) of which the Congress is also a part.

Stalin has exhorted party cadres to win all the 40 seats from Tamil



Nadu and Puducherry with 39 from Tamil Nadu and one from Puducherry in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The party feels that the success of the Bharat Jodo Yatra which has brought an alternate narrative across the country will reverberate in Tamil Nadu also.

The Congress has eight Lok Sabha MPs from Tamil Nadu and other than Kerala and Karnataka, the party

is expecting a major success in Tamil Nadu. Stalin and his DMK are a major support base for the party.

While Stalin is using the narrative of Rahul Gandhi's Yatra as a rallying point for the party and the alliance in the Lok Sabha elections, the Congress is riding piggyback on the cadre strength of the DMK in Tamil Nadu, thus focusing on each other's strengths to

Though the Yatra passed through Tamil Nadu for only four days, it was welcomed in an overwhelming manner by the DMK and its allies of the Secular Progressive Alliance of which the Congress is also a part

The Congress has eight Lok Sabha MPs from Tamil Nadu and other than Kerala and Karnataka, the party is expecting a major success in Tamil Nadu. Stalin and his DMK are a major support base for the party

gain momentum in the state.

The good governance and people friendly programmes of the state government led by Stalin has helped the DMK and the Secular Progressive Alliance in the state but Rahul Gandhi's Yatra has given the DMK a semblance of respect even at the national level. Wherever the Yatra reached, Stalin's name will echo as he was the one who inaugurated the Yatra.

S. Duraimurugan, senior leader of the DMK and minister for water works, said: "The successful completion of Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra is a prestigious moment for the DMK as it was our leader, M.K. Stalin who inaugu-

rated the Yatra at Kanyakumari. The Congress leader has walked on foot and faced adverse weather and uneven terrain to successfully complete the Yatra and has changed the narrative in the country." Another interesting turn was Tamil superstar and founder president of Makkal Needhi Maiam (MNM), Kamal Haasan joining the Yatra in Delhi.

Kamal Haasan and his MNM have been contesting the elections on their own without any alliance. DMK circles are now abuzz that Kamal would soon be joining the DMK front and the Yatra has been the reason for this new found bonhomie between the actor and the ruling party.

The DMK will be showcasing the success of the Yatra across Tamil Nadu and will portray this as the success of a single man against all odds. With the BJP not a big force in the state and the opposition AIADMK in disarray, the DMK led front seems to be on its way to victory in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The Congress also can rejoice in the fact that these seats will add to the opposition kitty to the disadvantage of the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Centre.

Cops open up history-sheets against drug peddlers in TN

This action comes after high incidences of 'ganja' being peddled in the districts of Madurai, Tenkasi, Virudhunagar, Dindigul, Theni, Ramanathapuram, Sivaganga and Tirunelveli



In 2022, the South Zone police have attached properties worth ₹12.5 crore of ganja peddlers and their relatives in connection with 13 cases of peddling and seizure of huge quantities of ganja and other banned psychotropic drugs.

The police have also frozen 1,956 bank accounts of the peddlers and their relatives. In another interesting development, the South Zone police have started collecting bonds from those convicted in ganja peddling cases to curb their further entry into the drug peddling business. Police sources said that bonds have been collected from 1,377 suspects and a total of 58 offenders who violated the bond conditions were arrested. The South Zone police have requested the special court to obtain bonds against convicts in ganja smuggling cases citing Section 34 of the NDPS Act.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Feb 6: The Tamil Nadu Police has opened history-sheets against 'ganja' peddlers in southern districts of the state, police said.

This action comes after high incidences of 'ganja' being peddled in the districts of Madurai, Tenkasi, Virudhunagar, Dindigul, Theni, Ramanathapuram, Sivaganga and Tirunelveli. According to sources in the South Zone police department, history-sheets have been opened against 624 'ganja' peddlers.

Generally history-sheets are opened against law and order and regular offenders, but the South Zone police have opened the history-sheets to curb the increasing incidences of ganja peddling in these districts.

SELF-DEFENCE TRAINING FOR GIRLS

TN schools looking for more money

A TOTAL OF 6,774 MIDDLE SCHOOLS AND 5,519 HIGH AND HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE STATE WILL BE GIVEN AN AMOUNT OF ₹5,000 PER MONTH PER SCHOOL FOR A PERIOD OF THREE MONTHS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Feb 6: Even as Tamil Nadu School Education Department has allocated ₹184 crore for self-defence training programme for Class 6-8 girl students studying in government schools, at a rate of ₹5,000 per month per school, the school managements claim that it was inadequate.

The self-defence training is part of the 'Atma Raksha Prashikshan Scheme' of the Central government. A total of 6,774 middle schools and 5,519 high and higher secondary schools in the state will be given an amount of ₹5,000 per month per school for a period of three months.

However, headmasters on condition of anonymity said: "The amount was inadequate as this amount includes the training fee of instructors, who are to be hired from outside as well as snacks to the students."

A government school headmaster of Kancheepuram said: "The amount that is granted per school is much less. We can't pay an instructor and then allocate funds for the snacks of the students who are undergoing training. We need more funds for providing the refreshments to the students."

The circular issued by the school education department states that a maximum of 100 students must



only be present in a class. "The students should be taught how they can use common things like key chains, dupattas of churidars, pencils, pens, and notebooks for self-defence. The training is given twice a week and women teachers are preferred," added the circular.

The School Education Department officials will conduct periodic reviews of the training programme being conducted in schools.

Another issue that is plaguing the teachers and school management committees is the lack of time as January is already over and by March-end summer vacation commences and hence the three months time will not be available. So, the school managements are submitting a proposal to the state government to increase the number of hours per week.

Nitish plays his cards close to his chest for 2024

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Patna, Feb 6: Despite the success of the Bharat Jodo Yatra, the opposition leaders in Bihar are not revealing their cards to either go with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi or the possible third front which Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao is trying to form for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

Bihar has a coalition government of seven parties headed by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar including deputy CM Tejashwi Yadav of the RJD and supported by the Congress, the Left and Hindustani Awam Morcha.

Nitish Kumar admits that challenging the Bharatiya Janata Party in 2024 would not be possible without the Congress. Still, he is not completely sure about the leadership qualities of Rahul Gandhi despite the good response to the Bharat Jodo Yatra.

He has also decided to send senior leader Lalan Singh to Telangana for the opening of the new Secretariat building and is trying to keep both the options open. Nitish Kumar earlier advocated an all parties meeting to prepare a common plan to challenge the BJP in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

At present, KCR is giving an impression of a non-BJP non-Congress regional parties alliance to

strengthen their position in their states. The idea is to make their bargaining position stronger with the Congress party post the Lok Sabha polls in 2024. Nitish Kumar probably does not agree with this formula as the chances of a division of votes are strong and the BJP will take advantage of it. Hence, Kumar is taking a balanced approach at present.

He is sending Lalan Singh as his representative to Hyderabad to keep the option open for a third front and is also waiting for the response of the Congress after the Bihar

Bihar has a coalition government of seven parties headed by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar including deputy CM Tejashwi Yadav of the RJD and supported by the Congress, the Left and Hindustani Awam Morcha

Jodo Yatra. The Telangana chief minister's office has also confirmed that Bihar deputy CM Tejashwi Yadav is also coming to Hyderabad on February 17 for the inauguration of the new Secretariat building.

After the formation of the

CONGRESS OR THIRD FRONT?



Mahagathbandhan government in Bihar, Nitish Kumar had taken the initiative to unite the opposition parties. He visited Delhi and met leaders of the opposition parties including Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi. At that time, these two leaders had not given a robust response to Nitish Kumar. Even the photographs of Sonia Gandhi with Nitish Kumar and Lalan Prasad Yadav were not put in the public domain.

This could be the reason why Nitish Kumar and Tejashwi Yadav

were invited by the Congress party to participate in the flag hoisting ceremony at Lal Chowk in Srinagar after the conclusion of the Bharat Jodo Yatra but these two leaders neither went there nor sent their representatives.

For the RJD, as it is part of the seven parties alliance, the political interests of Tejashwi Yadav are intertwined with Nitish Kumar. The RJD is considered very close to the Congress party and Sonia Gandhi and it will be interesting

to see the developments when Lalan Prasad returns to Patna.

RJD national vice-president Shivanand Tiwari said: "There is no doubt that the Bharat Jodo Yatra is a big success for Rahul Gandhi as well as the Congress party. They are now thinking that the Congress would become a serious option against the BJP. Rahul Gandhi, through Bharat Jodo Yatra, managed to shed his 'Pappu image' foisted by the BJP."

Tiwari continued: "The people of the country are considering Rahul Gandhi as a serious leader but he himself and the Congress party are showing arrogance as well. Rahul Gandhi has said the thinking of regional parties would not become national. He has also taken the name of SP chief Akhilesh Yadav. Congress senior leader Jairam Ramesh said that the fulcrum of the opposition parties will be Congress in the 2024 Lok Sabha election. These statements have sent out the wrong signals to the regional parties."

The RJD leader noted that the "Congress is a national party in the country but it has to give respect to regional parties as well. If you comment like this, why would regional parties go to Srinagar? You have to respect the regional parties as well and bring them on one platform. The Congress has to understand why regional parties emerged in the states."

Over 700 people take part in book reading marathon

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Gopalganj, Feb 6: In this day and age, where we find ourselves straying further away from books and getting closer to digital media, a book reading marathon was organised in Bihar's Gopalganj to increase people's interest in books, where more than 700 people sat together and read books for around two hours.

The purpose of the programme, organised by the Panchdeori Reading Marathon Club at Jamunahan Inter College campus Sunday, was to motivate people to reconnect with books. A total of



721 people read books of their choice at the event.

The mobile phones of people who participated in the marathon were switched off to avoid any disturbance. Local Block Development

The purpose of the programme, organised by the Panchdeori Reading Marathon Club at Jamunahan Inter College campus Sunday, was to motivate people to reconnect with books

A total of 721 people read books of their choice at the event

Officer and Inter College Principal Dr Durgacharan Pandey played a huge role in making the event successful. The members of the Reading Marathon Club said that most of the people who partici-

pated in the programme appreciated the event and urged them to organise similar events regularly.

The event was inaugurated by the District Magistrate of Gopalganj, Dr Nawal Kishor Choudhary, who advised that everyone should read a book for at least an hour daily. Describing good books as man's best friends, he said that books had their own importance in the digital era.

Praising the programme, he said that similar programmes will be organised in the country, inspired by the reading marathon in Gopalganj. Many young litterateurs and dignitaries were present on the occasion.

13th rock art cluster found in Madurai

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Feb 6: A cluster of rock paintings, including that of an elephant and human forms, has been found by rock art researchers in Poosariappatti in Melur taluk of Madurai.

This is the 13th rock art site in Madurai. Rock art researchers V. Bala Bharathi and V. Bala Murali had visited a cave behind a boulder that had been broken for mining in the area.

The researchers also found that there were numerous red and white paintings on the sides of the cave where the rock paintings were found in Poosariappatti. The paintings in the cave, according to the researchers were in various shades including both light and dark. The researchers also said that the drawings were done by the inhabitants of the cave many years ago.

Bala Bharathi said that these art forms have survived because mining was banned in the region. He said that however many such art forms have been destroyed also and requested the government to declare it into a protected site.



Antiquated looms push weavers' village Patwa Toli into struggle for survival

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Gaya, Feb 6: Patwa Toli of Manpur block in Gaya district, called the 'Manchester' of Bihar, was once identified as a village of weavers. "The situation has drastically changed," said 55-year-old Jumman Ansari, who is a worker in a powerloom here.

The small weavers and the powerloom owners have been facing a tough time as they are unable to compete with the technologically advanced machines of today's era. The demand for readymade garments of Punjab and Ludhiana has increased in the village's markets.

Manpur, which is also known as 'Mini Kanpur,' is situated on the

banks of Falgu river in the district. Powerlooms and handlooms are run in almost every house of the village, through which a wide array of fabrics, from gamcha (a traditional cotton towel) to quilt, mattresses and pillow covers are made.

Jumman Ansari said that earlier the elders would want their children to join the business, which was also preferred by the children. He added that the situation had changed as these days they do not want the future generations to indulge in the business.

Getting nostalgic of the past, Ansari said that the thread which is now imported from other states, was easily available in the village earlier. He added that the technique of weaving clothes in the



village remained the same whereas other states had progressive technology of the same.

President of Bihar Pradesh Weavers Welfare Association, Gopal Prasad Patwa said that earlier

threads were made in many areas, including Gaya, Bhagalpur and Mokama of the state. He said that these factories were gradually closed. Patwa added that it had been rightly said that the business is a cottage industry, in which the whole family gets involved. He said that the Mini Textile Park Screening Yarn Mill at Gaya would prove to be beneficial for the domestic micro cottage textile industry.

He added that adopting modern technology would lead to a decrease in cost and an increase in quality of production. Apart from 12,000 powerloom machines, 1,000 textile production units of a large number of handloom machines run today in the village.

A total of 20,000 workers are

provided employment directly or indirectly in operating these machines, running the calendaring machine along with dyeing and washing the yarn. An elderly artisan said that handlooms have been running in Manpur since three to four generations.

He said that the majority of handlooms that existed earlier had been replaced by powerlooms, the trend of which increased after 1957. Powerlooms run at a higher speed as compared to handlooms which increases the production, due to which the people started preferring powerlooms over handlooms.

Ravindra Singh, Bihar state president of Laghu Udyog Bharati, said that 70-75 per cent of the produced goods are sent to West Bengal.

of the day quote

Bulldozer cannot be the first response of a government. It's not a government's job to harass people. It's job is to heal the wounds



OMAR ABDULLAH | NATIONAL CONFERENCE VICE PRESIDENT

Palestine is still better. At least people talk. Kashmir is becoming worse than Afghanistan the way bulldozers are being used to demolish homes of people. What is the purpose of demolishing small houses of people



MEHBOOBA MUFTI | J&K FORMER CM

For a number of years, I have been talking about the government and Hum do, Humare do. The government does not want and is scared of a discussion in Parliament on Adani ji. The government should allow a discussion in Parliament and there will be attempts to avoid it



RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

SHORT TAKES

Former BJYM leader shot dead

Haridwar: Former district vice president of BJYM Amardeep Chaudhary was shot dead allegedly by his business partners here, police said Monday. Chaudhary was called late Sunday night by his real estate business partner Rajkumar Malik to his Raja Garden residence where his sons Mandeep and Harshdeep Malik allegedly shot him dead following an argument, SP (city) Swatantra Kumar said.

2 km rly track stolen in Bihar

Patna: Unidentified thieves have stolen two km railway track in Bihar's Samastipur district, an official said. The stolen track connected Lohat sugar mill with Pandaul railway station. As the sugar mill was shut for the past few years, there was no movement on the route. Two Railway Protection Force employees have been suspended in connection with the matter. Samastipur DRM has constituted a team to investigate the matter.

Man kills 3 members of neighbour's family

Surenranagar: Three members of a family were killed allegedly by their neighbour over a petty dispute in Gujarat's Surenranagar district Monday, police said. The incident took place in Fulgram village around 2 pm, when the accused attacked a man, his son and daughter-in-law with a sharp weapon, superintendent of police Haresh Dudhat said.

Bus catches fire

New Delhi: Passengers on a low-floor DTC bus had a close shave after the vehicle suddenly caught fire in Kanjhawala area on Delhi's outskirts Monday afternoon, officials said. According to information, the bus was of route number 106, plying between Old Delhi Railway Station and Qutubgarh. The Fire Department said that they got a call of the incident at around 2 p.m.. A local police team also reached the spot.

Avalanche kills 2

Shimla: Two labourers were killed and another is feared trapped under the snow after an avalanche hit the Shinkula-Darcha road in Lahaul and Spiti district of Himachal Pradesh, officials said Monday. The avalanche hit Chika village Sunday evening, they said. Three labourers were buried under the snow along with snow cutters in the avalanche, the officials said.



I have noticed the high number of fatalities in road accidents across the country. I urge you all to innovate and implement the best engineering and technological solutions to minimise road accidents

DROUPADI MURMU | PRESIDENT OF INDIA

MUMBAI POLICE BAN DRONES, GLIDERS DURING MODI'S VISIT

Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's daylong visit to Mumbai, the police have banned the use of drones, paragliders and remote-controlled microlight aircraft, all types of balloons, kites, at various locations in the city, an official said



Ruckus stalls Delhi mayoral polls again, AAP to move SC

The AAP Monday said it wants mayoral polls to be "Supreme Court-monitored"

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 6: The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) House failed to elect a mayor even in the third attempt following a ruckus Monday after the presiding officer said that the aldermen nominated by LG will vote in the polls, prompting an agitated AAP to announce it will move the Supreme Court.

Both the BJP and AAP have accused each other of preventing the mayoral polls, with the bone of contention being the appointment of aldermen and their voting right in the House. AAP, which has a majority with 134 out of 250 elected members, has alleged that the BJP was trying to steal its mandate by giving voting rights to the nominated members.

Soon after the MCD House assembled around 11:30 am, after a delay of half an hour, presiding officer Satya Sharma announced that aldermen will be allowed to vote in elections to the posts of mayor, deputy mayor and Standing Committee members which will be held simultaneously. Sharma cited the 2016 High Court ruling in North Delhi Municipal Corporation Vs Onika Mehrotra case for the direction.

This drew protests from AAP councillors, with party leader Mukesh Goel contending that the aldermen are not allowed to vote under the law. AAP alleged that the 2016 high court ruling that the presiding officer referred to was wrongly quoted. After a while, AAP members sat down, but BJP councillors started raising slogans and asked AAP not to prevent the mayoral polls. Soon after the slogans died down, presiding officer Sharma said that AAP councillors Akhilesh Tripathi and Sanjeev Jha should not be allowed to vote because they have corruption allegations against them.



AAP Mayor candidate Shelly Oberoi along with senior AAP leader Sanjay Singh and MCD Councillors flashes victory sign during the election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor at the Civic Centre

This drew a sharp reaction from the AAP councillors. BJP councillors then started protesting, demanding the removal of Tripathi and Jha from the House.

The MLAs are among the 14 AAP legislators nominated by the Delhi Assembly Speaker to the MCD in December.

Amid the pandemonium, the House was adjourned for 10 minutes and then for the entire day. Outside the House, AAP leaders questioned the denial of the voting right to Tripathi and Sanjay Jha, contending that the court had suspended their sentence. "So, if there is a stay, how can they not have a voting right," Sanjay Singh said during a press conference.

The standoff between the BJP and AAP had stalled the election process during the earlier two sessions of the municipal House January 6 and 24. After emerging from the House, AAP leader Atishi told reporters, "We will go to the Supreme Court, and we will go today itself so that the mayoral elections can be held in a court-monitored manner."

"Our demands are that the mayoral election should be held in a time-bound manner in the next two weeks and the aldermen should not be allowed to vote," she said. BJP MP Harsh Vardhan, who came to the House on Monday, however, said the aldermen have been "given the right to vote by a court" and the "presiding officer is doing everything as per the law."

"My appeal to the councillors, irrespective of whether they belong to AAP or BJP is that wisdom should prevail upon them and they should ensure that the voting takes place in an amicable manner," he said. Speaking to PTI, AAP Mayor candidate Shelly Oberoi raved: "This was the third time the house meeting was held and here we are again without the mayor. The intention of the BJP was clear from the very beginning. Everything that was held in the house was unconstitutional. Atishi claimed the BJP had planned to disrupt the proceedings so that the House could be adjourned."

1.28 lakh cos struck off from records for non-compliance



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

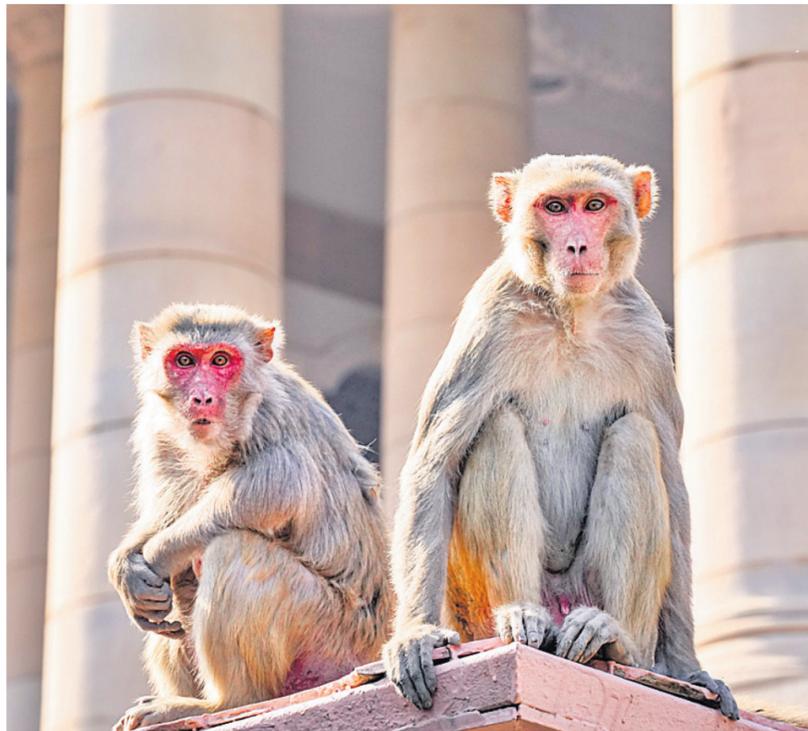
New Delhi, Feb 6: The government has struck off 1,27,952 companies from the records for failing to submit their financial statements for two continuous financial years, Union minister Rao Inderjit Singh said Monday.

In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, he also said the term 'shell company' is not defined under the Companies Act, 2013.

The government undertook a special drive for identification and striking off companies u/s 248(1) of the Act read with the Companies (Removal of Names of Companies) Rules from the Register of Companies) Rules that had not filed their financial statements and/or annual returns for a continuous period of two immediately preceding financial years. "A number of 1,27,952 companies have been struck off in last 3 years," the Minister of State for Corporate Affairs said.

He was responding to a query on whether the government has implemented any safeguard measures for firms that unknowingly conduct business with the shell companies. To put in place safeguard measures with respect to transactions with such struck off companies, Singh said the ministry had amended a schedule of the Act in March 2021. With the amendment, companies having relationship with struck off companies will have to make certain disclosures. When asked whether the government has notified the rules to permit companies, especially startups to allow them to directly list their securities on foreign stock exchanges, the minister replied in the negative.

"Section 5 of the Companies (Amendment) Act, 2020 (amending Section 23 of the Companies Act, 2013) has not yet been brought into force. Hence, no rules have been notified for direct listing of securities on foreign stock exchanges as of now," he said in another written reply.



Two monkeys sit on a security check post at the Parliament complex in New Delhi

PTI PHOTO

MAHA CONG TUSSLE THORAT WRITES TO KHARGE AGAINST PATOLE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai/Pune Feb 6: Senior Congress leader Balasaheb Thorat has written to the party's central leadership citing his inability to work with Maharashtra unit chief Nana Patole due to the latter's "anger" towards him, an aide of the former claimed Monday.

Patole told reporters in Pune he didn't think Thorat had written any such letter, adding he would only be able to comment if he knew this "letter's contents".

In his letter to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Thorat, a former state unit chief and minister, has also said he is not being consulted before decisions were being taken here, the aide added. "Thorat, in his letter to the Congress leadership, has expressed inability to work with state president Nana Patole saying if he (Patole) holds so much anger against him, then it would be difficult to work with him. Thorat has also complained of not being consulted while decisions are taken," the close aide claimed. Patole, speaking to reporters, said, "I do not know what letter Thorat saheb has written. I can speak on it if the contents are made available to me. I don't think Thorat has written any such letter."

Patole added a meeting of the state executive committee of the Congress will be held on February 13 where several issues will be discussed to find solutions.

The matter comes days after then Nashik graduates constituency MLC Sudhir Tambe, who is the brother-in-law of Thorat, declined to contest despite being the Congress' official candidate and got his son Satyajit Tambe to fight as an independent. Satyajit Tambe won the poll, results of which were announced February 2. While the Congress was left red-faced due to the episode, the silence of Thorat, who is recuperating from a shoulder injury, was seen as silent support to the Tambe father-son duo, sources said.

Soon, train passengers can order food via WhatsApp

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 6: Train passengers would soon be able to order food through a WhatsApp number, with an interactive Artificial Intelligence-enabled chatbot handling their queries on e-catering and booking meals.

The Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) is already delivering meals on certain routes through WhatsApp number +91 8750001323.

"WhatsApp communication for e-catering services implemented on selected trains and passengers. Based on customer feedback and suggestions, the company will enable the same on other trains," the Railways said in a statement on Monday.

The IRCTC has started e-catering services through a specially developed website www.Catering.Irctc.Co.In as well its e-catering app 'Food on Track', it said.

The implementation of e-catering services through WhatsApp was envisaged in two phases. The first phase has already been implemented. Under this, a business WhatsApp number sends a message to the customers booking e-ticket for opting in e-catering services by clicking on www.Ecatering.Irctc.Co.In.



They are then enables to book meals of their choice from the restaurants of their choice available at stations enroute directly

through the e-catering website of IRCTC without even requiring to download the App. The next phase is when the interactive WhatsApp

meal booking and delivery are planned.

Under this, the WhatsApp number will be enabled to become an interactive two way communication platform for the customer wherein an AI-powered chatbot will handle all queries of e-catering services for the passengers and book meals for them. The company in a statement stated that the passengers by their PNR numbers can use the WhatsApp-based self-service food delivery platform to place food orders and get their deliveries straight to their seats with real-time order tracking, feedback and support.

Currently, approximately 50,000 meals are being served in a day to the customers through IRCTC's e-catering services enabled through its website as well as app.

At present, around 50,000 meals are being served to customers through the IRCTC's website and app on a daily basis

international



The decisions of the leadership will continue to be implemented, including halting security coordination with Israel
MAHMOUD ABBAS | PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT

UNDER THREAT

A leading conservation research group found that 40% of animals and 34% of plants in the United States are at risk of extinction, while 41% of ecosystems are facing collapse



of the day quote

Our discussion covered a range of trade and investment issues, including the need for resumption of unimpeded trade for Australian exporters so that Chinese consumers can continue to benefit from high quality Australian products

DON FARRELL | SPECIAL MINISTER OF STATE OF AUSTRALIA

Even if our hearts bleed for the wrongs we have suffered, let us refuse, once and for all, to repay evil with evil

POPE FRANCIS

The Serbian government should acknowledge the independence of all the ex-republics of former Yugoslavia in order to "face the past"

ALBIN KURTI | PRIME MINISTER OF KOSOVO

Israeli troops kill 5 Palestinian gunmen

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Aqabat Jabr (West Bank), Feb 6: Israeli forces killed five Palestinian gunmen linked to the Islamic militant Hamas group in a raid on a refugee camp in the occupied West Bank on Monday, the latest bloodshed in the region that will likely further exacerbate tensions.

The Palestinian president's office called the violence a crime, urging the United States to pressure Israel to hold back on its incursions. The military said the raid was meant to apprehend a militant cell that staged a botched shooting attack on a restaurant in a Jewish settlement in the West Bank.



The violence comes amid one of the deadliest periods in years in the West Bank and in the first weeks of Israel's new government, its most right-wing ever, which has promised to take a tough stance against the Palestinians.

The Israeli military said it was operating in the Aqabat Jabr refugee camp to apprehend the suspects behind a failed shooting attack last month at a West Bank restaurant, where attackers allegedly were thwarted by a weapon malfunction. The attackers then fled the scene, the military said, adding that they were members of the Hamas militant group that rules the Gaza Strip and has elements in the West Bank as well. The military said it was searching Monday for the militant cell behind the shooting that it said had sealed itself inside a home in the refugee camp.



People gather as rescuers search for survivors under the rubble, following an earthquake, in rebel-held town of Jandar, Syria



People search through rubble following an earthquake in Diyarbakir, Turkey

REUTERS

DEADLY QUAKE EXACERBATES SUFFERING

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Darkush, Feb 6: A steady stream of injured were flowing into an overwhelmed hospital in the town of Darkush, in rebel-held northwestern Syria on Monday, after a deadly earthquake struck the region. Mothers hovered over crying children.

Amid the chaos, one man sat with a dazed expression, his face covered with abrasions. The man, Osama Abdul Hamid, had barely made it out alive with his wife and four children from his apartment building in the nearby village of Azmarin. Many of their neighbours were not so lucky.

"The building is four stories, and from three of them, no one made it out," Abdul Hamid said, breaking down in tears. "God gave me a new lease on life." The powerful 7.8 magnitude quake that struck before dawn on Monday wreaked new damage and suffering in Syria's last rebel-held enclave, already wrecked by years of fighting and bombardment and housing millions of displaced Syrians who had fled their homes during the country's civil war.

Hospitals and clinics were flooded with injured. In the enclave, centred in Idlib province, many of the displaced live in dire conditions in makeshift camps. Many others there and in neighbouring government-held areas are housed in buildings weakened by past bombings and left even more vulnerable to shocks from earthquakes.

The quake caused total and partial damage to buildings in at least 58 villages, towns and cities in northwestern Syria, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based war monitor. More than 1,300 people were

- Hospitals and clinics were flooded with injured
- The powerful 7.8 magnitude quake that struck before dawn on Monday wreaked new damage and suffering in Syria's last rebel-held enclave, already wrecked by years of fighting and bombardment and housing millions of displaced Syrians who had fled their homes during the country's civil war
- The quake caused total and partial damage to buildings in at least 58 villages, towns and cities in northwestern Syria, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based war monitor



killied in Turkey and Syria, with the toll expected to climb. In the opposition-held territory in Syria, more than 100 were reported dead, but hundreds more were be-

lieved to be buried under the rubble of their homes. "This disaster will worsen the suffering of Syrians already struggling with a severe humanitarian crisis," Carsten Hansen, the director for Middle East at the Norwegian Refugee Council, said in a statement. "Millions have already been forced to flee by war in the wider region and now many more will be displaced by disaster."

In the hospital in Darkush in western Idlib, Abdul Hamid told how his family were sleeping in their apartment when they were roused by powerful, prolonged shaking. They ran from the apartment, but "before we reached the door of the building, the whole building came down on us," he said.

A wooden door shielded them from the worst force of the collapse — they all got out alive. He and his wife and three of the children suffered head injuries but are all in stable condition. The scale of the casualties quickly overwhelmed the hospital's resources, said Majdi al-Ibrahim, a general surgeon at the hospital. "We need urgent help. The danger is beyond our capacity," he said.

The Syrian American Medical Society, which runs hospitals in northern Syria and southern Turkey, said in a statement that its facilities are "overwhelmed with patients filling the hallways" and called urgently for "trauma supplies and a comprehensive emergency response to save lives and treat the injured." The opposi-

tion territory in the northwest corner of Syria has held out for years even after Syrian government forces retook most rebel-held areas around the country.

Fighting still flares from time to time with Russian-backed Syrian forces nearby. Parts of the territory are run by rebel groups, including a dominant al-Qaida-linked militant faction, while parts are under a Turkish-backed administration known as the Syrian Interim Government. The disaster came on the heels of severe winter storms, further adding to the misery of those left without shelter.

"There is rain and the weather is very cold, there is snow in some of the areas," Abdel Hakim al-Masri, economy minister with the Turkish-backed regional administration, told The Associated Press. He noted that some of the displacement camps in the area had been decimated by the quake. "There is a huge amount of suffering, and this will increase it," he said.



Balloon drama: China urges restraint

The balloon drama has further strained tense relations, prompting Washington to cancel a planned visit over the weekend to Beijing by Secretary of State Antony Blinken

REUTERS

Beijing/Washington, Feb 6: Beijing Monday urged Washington to show restraint as the US military searched for remnants of what it believes was a Chinese surveillance balloon it shot down over the Atlantic but which China says was a civilian craft that accidentally drifted astray.

The balloon drama has further strained tense relations, prompting Washington to cancel a planned visit over the weekend to Beijing by Secretary of State Antony Blinken. A US fighter jet shot down the balloon off South Carolina Saturday after the military had tracked its path across the conti-



REUTERS

mental United States, a response China described as an "obvious overreaction".

China has repeatedly said the balloon was intended for scientific purposes and had blown off course. "China firmly opposes and strongly protests against this," Vice Foreign Minister Xie Feng said in remarks to the U.S. embassy in Beijing posted on the ministry's website.

The US Navy was working to recover the balloon and its payload and the Coast Guard was providing security for the operation, General Glen VanHerck, commander of the North American Aerospace Defense Command and

U.S. Northern Command, said Sunday. A successful recovery could potentially give the United States insight into China's spying capabilities, though US officials have downplayed the balloon's impact on national security.

On Monday, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said China had found out its balloon had drifted over the United States after being notified by it. "The unintended entry of this airship (into the U.S.) is entirely an isolated, accidental incident. It tests the sincerity the U.S. has in improving and stabilising bilateral relations and the way it handles crisis," she said.

British workers stage largest strike

REUTERS

London, Feb 6: Health workers in Britain began their largest strike Monday, as tens of thousands of nurses and ambulance workers walk out in an escalating pay dispute, putting further strain on the state-run National Health Service (NHS).

Nurses and ambulance workers have been striking separately on and off since late last year but Monday's walkout involving both, largely in England, is the biggest in the 75-year history of the NHS.

Nurses will also strike on Tuesday, while ambulance staff will walk out on Friday and physiotherapists on Thursday, making the week probably the most disruptive in NHS history, its Medical Director Stephen Powis said.

Health workers are demanding a pay rise that reflects the worst inflation in Britain in four decades, while the government says that would be unaffordable and cause more price rises, and in turn, make interest rates and mortgage payments rise.



Nurses protest during a strike by NHS medical workers, amid a dispute with the government over pay, outside St Thomas' Hospital, in London, Britain

Around 500,000 workers, many from the public sector, have been staging strikes since last summer, adding to pressure on Prime Minister Rishi Sunak to resolve the disputes and limit disruption to public services such as railways and schools.

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) trade union wrote to Sunak over the weekend asking him to bring the nursing strike "to a swift close" by making "meaningful" pay offers.

"We've got one of the busiest winters we have ever had with record levels of funding going into the NHS to try and manage services," Maria Caulfield, the minister for mental health and women's health strategy, told Sky News on Monday. "So every percent of a pay increase takes money away."

The government has urged people to continue to access emergency services and attend appointments during the strikes

AID POURS IN

Dozens of governments and international organisations have responded with offers of support after an earthquake of magnitude 7.8 struck central Turkey and northwest Syria. Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said Monday that 45 countries had offered help with search and rescue efforts. Below is a list of some of those announcements of support:

GERMANY
Interior Minister Nancy Faeser said Germany's federal civil protection agency could provide camps with emergency shelters and water treatment units and that it was already preparing relief supplies with emergency generators, tents and blankets, in coordination with the Turkish authorities.

UN WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION
WHO chief Tedros said its network of emergency medical teams has been activated to provide essential health care for the injured and most vulnerable affected by the earthquake.

ITALY
Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said Italy's Civil Protection was standing by to contribute support and provide first aid.

INDIA
The government said two teams from India's National Disaster Response Force comprising 100 personnel with specially trained dog squads and equipment were ready to be flown to the disaster area for search and rescue operations. Medical teams were being readied and relief material was being sent in coordination with the Turkish authorities.

POLAND
Poland will send rescue group HUSAR consisting of 76 firemen and eight rescue dogs, Interior and Administration Minister Mariusz Kami ski said.

EUROPEAN UNION
European Commissioner for Crisis Management Janez Lenar i said the EU's 24/7 Emergency Response Coordination Centre had been in contact with the Turkish authorities and had activated its emergency Copernicus satellite mapping service to help first responders working on the ground.

TAIWAN
Taiwan's fire department said a team of 40 rescuers along with three search and rescue dogs and four to five tonnes of aid would leave for Turkey on Monday. It previously said it was ready to offer a team 130 people, along with five search dogs and 13 tonnes of aid, and was awaiting Turkey's response.

UKRAINE
President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Ukraine was ready to send support. "We are in this moment close to the friendly Turkish people, ready to provide the necessary assistance," he said.

RUSSIA
Russia's emergencies ministry said two IL-76 aircraft with 100 rescuers were ready to fly out to Turkey if required. President Vladimir Putin sent messages to Turkey and to Syria, where Russian troops have been supporting the Syrian military, expressing condolences to the Presidents of both nations and offering support.

GREECE
Greek Prime Minister Kyrikos Mitsotakis offered condolences and support to Turkey, saying Greece was mobilising its resources and will assist immediately.

of the day quote

The (PLI) scheme is working. Already about Rs 45,000 crore-plus investment has come in, three lakh jobs have been created and production worth Rs 2 lakh crore is already there

One of the reasons why allocation for MGNREGS was lowered is because there is a much larger substantive increase in allocation in particularly PMAY (rural) and Jal Jeevan Yojana...So the expectation is that the rural workers would be able to find jobs in these projects

V ANANTHA NAGESWARAN | CHIEF ECONOMIC ADVISOR

Bridgestone India is bringing in its global technologies and manufacturing for the Indian market so as to suit the needs of aspiring Indian consumers that want more fuel-efficient tyres, and better products to suit the improved quality of Indian roads

STEFANO SANCHINI | BRIDGESTONE INDIA MD

RESULTS CORNER

P&G net profit dips 2% to ₹207cr

New Delhi: Procter & Gamble Hygiene and Health Care Monday said its net profit declined 2 per cent to Rs 207 crore for the October-December quarter on account of commodity cost inflation. The company, which follows the July-June financial year, had posted a net profit of Rs 212 crore in the same period of last fiscal. Revenue from operations rose to Rs 1,137 crore in the period under review as against Rs 1,092 crore in the year-ago period, Procter & Gamble said in a statement. "Despite external headwinds and macro-economic environment, we delivered a resilient performance as this quarter recorded sequential progress across topline and bottom line," Procter & Gamble Hygiene and Health Care MD LV Vaidyanathan said.

LIC HFL net plunges 37%

Mumbai: Pure-play mortgage lender LIC Housing Finance Monday reported a massive 37 per cent on-year plunge in net profit to Rs 480.30 crore in the December quarter as the company made additional provisions for expected credit loss, despite improvement in asset quality. The LIC subsidiary has made additional prudential provisions of Rs 7,285.09 crore during the quarter, taking its coverage rate to 51 per cent against Rs 5,715.76 crore in December 2021 and Rs 6,522 crore in September 2022. In the year-ago quarter, its provision coverage ratio stood at a little over 44 per cent, Y Viswanatha Gowd, the managing director and chief executive of the company said.

JK Paper profit jumps two-fold

New Delhi: JK Paper Monday reported a more than two-fold increase in consolidated net profit at Rs 333.54 crore in the December quarter, mainly helped by higher sales volume. The company had logged a net profit of Rs 151.05 crore in the October-December period a year ago, JK Paper said in a regulatory filing. Its revenue from operations went up 60.51 per cent to Rs 1,643.06 crore in the third quarter of the current fiscal. It stood at Rs 1,023.62 crore in the corresponding quarter last year. JK Paper's total expenses were at Rs 1,241.13 crore, up 46.63 per cent in the December quarter.



You don't have a recession when you have 500,000 jobs and the lowest unemployment rate in more than 50 years

JANET YELLEN | US TREASURY SECRETARY

INDIA'S COAL TARGET

The country's coal production target has been fixed at 1,017 million tonne for the next fiscal, Parliament was informed Monday. In a written reply to the Rajya Sabha, Coal Minister Pralhad Joshi said the steps were being taken by the Centre to augment the coal output in the country by engaging mine developers and operators.



Petrol doped with 20% ethanol starts retailing in 11 states/UTs

Use of ethanol, extracted from sugarcane as well as broken rice and other agri produce, will help the world's third largest oil consumer and importing country cut its reliance on overseas shipments

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Feb 6: Petrol doped with 20 per cent ethanol was rolled out Monday at select petrol pumps in 11 states and union territories as part of a programme to increase use of biofuels to cut emissions as well as dependence on foreign exchange-draining imports.

At present, 10 per cent ethanol is blended in petrol (10 per cent ethanol, 90 per cent petrol) and the government is looking to double this quantity by 2025.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the higher 20 per cent ethanol blended petrol two months ahead of the planned rollout in April, at the India Energy Week (IEW) 2023 here.

"We have increased ethanol blending in petrol from 1.5 per cent (in 2014) to 10 per cent and are now progressing towards 20 per cent blending," Modi said.

In the first phase, 15 cities will be covered and in the next two years it will be expanded throughout the country.

India saved as much as Rs 53,894 crore in forex outgo from 10 per cent blending besides benefiting the farmers.

E-20 (petrol with 20 per cent ethanol) will be available at 84 petrol pumps of three state-owned fuel retailers in 11 States/UTs.

Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said India achieved blending of 10



per cent ethanol in petrol, 5 months in advance during June 2022.

"We also advanced the availability of E20 blended petrol to 2025, 5 years from earlier planned in 2030," he said, adding that now E20 is being rolled out ahead of schedule on a pilot basis.

"As a country on a fast trajectory of economic growth, India is projected to witness the largest increase in energy demand of any country over the next two decades, accounting for close to 28 per cent of incremental global growth in energy demand," he said.

Use of ethanol, extracted from sugarcane as well as broken rice and other agri produce, will help the world's third largest oil consumer and importing country cut its reliance on overseas shipments. India currently is 85 per cent dependent on imports for meeting its oil needs. Also, it cuts carbon emissions.

Use of E20 leads to an estimated reduction of carbon monoxide emissions by about 50 per cent in two-wheelers and about 30 per cent in four-wheelers compared to E0 (neat petrol). Hydrocarbon emissions are estimated to reduce by 20 per cent in both two-wheelers and

passenger cars.

India spent USD 120.7 billion on import of crude oil in 2021-22 fiscal (April 2021 to March 2022). In the current fiscal, USD 125 billion have been spent on oil imports in the first nine months (April 2022 to December 2022) alone.

As much as 440 crore litre of ethanol was blended in petrol during the supply year ending November 30, 2022. For the next year, 540 crore litres procurement is being targeted with an eye to start larger volumes of blending.

The target of achieving average 10 per cent blending was achieved in June, 2022, much ahead of the target date of November, 2022. Encouraged by the success, the government advanced the target of 20 per cent ethanol blending in petrol from earlier 2030 to 2025.

The programme gives sugarcane farmers an additional source of income. During the last eight years, ethanol suppliers have earned Rs 81,796 crore while farmers have got Rs 49,078 crore. The country saved Rs 53,894 crore in foreign exchange outgo. Also, it led to reduction of 318 lakh tonnes of carbon-dioxide (CO2) emissions.

Govt to monitor CAD as export growth declines: MoS Finance

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 6: The government Monday said it is aware of the downside risks to the Indian economy and will closely monitor the current account deficit (CAD) in view of the decline in export growth.

Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said the government has implemented several measures to limit the impact of external factors on India's inflation and growth.

The price situation of major essential commodities is monitored by the Central Government on a regular basis and corrective action is taken from time to time. Several supply-side measures have been taken by the government to address inflation, like cut in excise duty on petrol and diesel, prohibition of export of wheat products, imposition of export duty on rice, reduction in import duties and cess on pulses, maintenance of buffer stock for onion and pulses.

"In second half of 2022-23, retail inflation has fallen below tolerance ceiling, portfolio investments started to return, rupee has stabilized against dollar, but export growth has declined with slowing of global growth. The CAD thus needs to be closely monitored," Chaudhary said.

ent nations.

He stated that despite the global crisis, India remained a bright spot for the world in 2022 due to its internal resilience.

"Multiple factors were behind it like stable and decisive government, sustained reforms, and socio-economic empowerment at the grassroots," he said.

He also noted that over 6 lakh km of optical fibre network has been laid to provide internet facilities to villages.

"The number of Broadband users in India has become 13 times more than it was 9 years ago, and the number of internet connections has tripled in the same period," the Prime Minister said.

He said India is working on expanding its refining capacity from 250 MMTPA to 450

MMPTA.

The Prime Minister said that India's gas pipeline network will expand to 35,000 km in the next four-five years from 22,000 km presently.

In 2014, the length of the gas pipeline in India was around 14,000 km; now it stands at over 22,000 km. Gas pipeline network in India to reach 35,000 km in the next 4-5 years.

Modi said that the government is working on a mission mode to increase the consumption of natural gas in India's energy mix from 6 per cent to 15 per cent by 2030 where all the needed infrastructure will be provided by 'One Nation One Grid'.

"The government is trying to increase the capacity of LNG Terminal regasification," the Prime Minister said.

He further added that the terminal regasification capacity of 21 MMTPA has doubled in 2022 while efforts are being made to increase it even more.

MMPTA.

The Prime Minister said that India's gas pipeline network will expand to 35,000 km in the next four-five years from 22,000 km presently.

In 2014, the length of the gas pipeline in India was around 14,000 km; now it stands at over 22,000 km. Gas pipeline network in India to reach 35,000 km in the next 4-5 years.

Modi said that the government is working on a mission mode to increase the consumption of natural gas in India's energy mix from 6 per cent to 15 per cent by 2030 where all the needed infrastructure will be provided by 'One Nation One Grid'.

"The government is trying to increase the capacity of LNG Terminal regasification," the Prime Minister said.

Sensex dips 334 pts amid FII outflows and global selloff

AGENCIES

Mumbai, Feb 6: Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty declined by more than half a per cent at close Monday due to selling in IT, power and metal shares triggered by a global equity meltdown on rate hike fears and FII outflows.

Snapping its five-day gaining streak, the 30-share BSE Sensex settled lower by 334.98 points or 0.55 per cent at 60,506.90. During the session, the index fell over 500 points to touch its intra-day low of 60,345.61.

The broader NSE Nifty dipped 89.45 points or 0.50 per cent to close at 17,764.60 as 34 of its stocks dropped.

Tata Steel was the biggest loser in the Sensex pack, falling 2.06 per cent, followed by Kotak Bank, Infosys, ICICI Bank, M&M, Ultra Cement and Tata Motors.

On the other hand, IndusInd Bank, Bajaj Finance, PowerGrid and ITC were among the major winners.

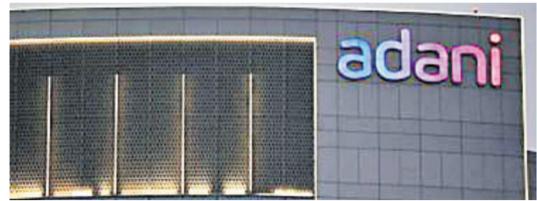
State Bank of India closed marginally up 0.17 per cent after Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that banks and insurance companies are 'not over-exposed' to any one company and assured that Indian markets are very well managed by its regulators. In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge rose 0.75 per cent and smallcap index gained 0.49 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, metal dipped 4 per cent, utilities fell 1.26 per cent, Power declined 1.01 per cent, IT (0.67 per cent) and tech (0.65 per cent).

Telecommunications, services, Capital Good, and Bankex were among the winners.

Foreign investors pulled out Rs 28,852 crore from Indian equities in January, making it the worst outflow in the last seven months, primarily due to the attractiveness of the Chinese markets.

Adani to pre-pay \$1,114mn for release of pledged shares



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 6: Adani group Monday announced that promoters will pre-pay USD 1,114 million for the release of pledged shares of its firms ahead of the maturity in September 2024 while saying the step is being done "in light of the recent market volatility."

These shares belong to Adani Ports & Special Economic Zones, Adani Green Energy and Adani Transmission, a statement said.

"This is in continuation of promoters' assurance to pre-pay all share-backed financing," it said.

The statement assumes significance in view of the allegations of fraud and stock manipulation by a short-seller against the Adani group, which led to a steep fall in the share prices of group firms.

"In light of the recent market volatility and in continuation of promoters' commitment to reduce the overall promoter leverage backed by Adani listed companies shares, we are pleased to inform that promoters have posted the amounts to pre-pay USD 1,114 million ahead of its maturity of September 2024," the statement said.

On pre-payment, 168.27 million shares of Adani Ports & Special Economic Zones representing 12 per cent of the promoter's holding will be released.

In the case of Adani Green

Energy, 27.56 million shares representing 3 per cent of the promoter's holding will be released.

Also, 11.77 million shares of Adani Transmission representing 1.4 per cent of the promoter's holding will be freed.

Majority of Adani stocks end lower

New Delhi: Shares of most of the Adani group firms ended lower Monday, with the group companies' combined mcap witnessing a sharp fall of Rs 9.5 lakh crore after US-based short-seller Hindenburg Research's adverse report. At the end of Monday's trading session, six of the 10 Adani group companies ended in the negative territory, with Adani Transmission slipping 10 per cent, while the shares of Adani Total Gas, Adani Power, Adani Green Energy and Adani Wilmar declined 5 per cent each.

Shares of Adani Enterprises closed for the day at Rs 1,572.40, down 0.74 per cent over its previous close. Four of the Adani group companies defied the trend and settled in the positive territory with Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone closing higher by 9.46 per cent, Ambuja Cements (up 1.54 per cent), ACC (up 2.24 per cent) and NDTV (up 1.37 per cent).

RBI's MPC meeting starts; lower rate hike expected

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 6: RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das-headed Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) started its three-day meeting Monday amid expectations of a smaller 25 basis points rate increase or a pause on the rate hiking spree that started in May last year to check inflation.

The decision of the six-member rate setting panel will be announced by the Governor Wednesday.

With retail inflation showing signs of moderation and remaining below the Reserve Bank of India's 6 per cent upper tolerance level, and projected slowdown in GDP growth in the next fiscal starting April, experts are of the opinion that the central bank may only opt for a 25 basis points hike in the key interest rate.

Another opinion is that the RBI may press the pause button on rate hike on Wednesday itself.

"We expect the RBI to pause in February policy," State Bank of India's Economic Research Department said in a report titled 'Prelude to MPC Meeting on Feb 6-8, 2023'.

In the current rate cycle, it said



that rate actions, both hikes and cuts, have been largely synchronised with actions of the monetary authorities in the developed nations.

The stance, the SBI report said could continue to be withdrawal of accommodation, even as liquidity is close to neutral.

"Even though the RBI could pause as it allows past rate actions to work with long and variable lags, the RBI could still guide the markets with a rate action in future that will be purely data dependent," it said.

According to the report, 6.25 per cent repo rate could be the terminal rate for now.

In its December monetary policy review, the central bank raised

the key benchmark interest rate (repo) by 35 basis points (bps) after delivering three back-to-back increases of 50 bps.

Since May last year, the RBI has increased the short-term lending rate by 225 basis points to contain inflation, mostly driven by external factors, especially global supply chain disruption following the Russia-Ukraine war outbreak.

The RBI has been tasked to ensure that retail inflation remains at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent. However, it failed to keep the inflation rate below six per cent for three consecutive quarters beginning January 2022.

However, the retail inflation based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) has shown signs of moderation in November and December as it fell below the RBI's upper tolerance level of 6 per cent.

The MPC consists of three RBI officials and three external members appointed by the central government.

Apart from the Governor, the RBI officials on the panel are Rajiv Ranjan (Executive Director) and Michael Debabrata Patra (Deputy Governor).

RETAIL VEHICLE SALES UP 14% IN JAN

REUTERS

Bangalore, Feb 6: Retail vehicle sales in India jumped 14% to about 1.8 million units in January, the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) said Monday, adding that a reopening of factories in China would help improve the supply of vehicles.

After strict COVID lockdowns in China, the country is seeing an uptick in factory activity, improving global supplies of parts and semiconductors, and helping better vehicle supplies and lower waiting period in future.

This improvement would fuel growth in an already healthy passenger vehicle category, the automobile dealers' body said.

Passenger vehicle (PV) sales



jumped 22% year-on-year to 3,40,220 units in January, while it grew 8% from pre-COVID 2020 levels, helped by healthy bookings and improved

supplies, FADA data showed.

Maruti Suzuki, with a market share of 44.1%, registered sales of 1,50,046 units last month.

Two-wheeler sales grew 10% to 12,65,069 units year-on-year, but were down 13% compared to January 2020, as rural markets lagged, according to the FADA data.

"While good enquiry, healthy bookings and improved supplies are helping aid this segment, it is the entry-level sub-segment which is still feeling the pinch," the body said.

The latest financial budget, with changes made to the income tax rules, could help boost the entry-level demand, it added.

Three-wheeler demand stayed strong, growing nearly 59% and nearing pre-pandemic levels, benefiting from demand in commercial space and the government's electric vehicle subsidy for public and shared transportation, the data showed.

FORMER INDIA HEAD COACH SHASTRI BACKS KULDEEP FOR THIRD SPINNER'S SPOT AGAINST AUSTRALIA

'Ashwin should not over-plan'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Nagpur, Feb 6: Ravichandran Ashwin's form will decide the fate of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, feels former India head coach Ravi Shastri, who wouldn't want him to over-plan against Australia in the upcoming four-match Test series.

Shastri, under whose tutelage India won back-to-back Test series in Australia, also has no hesitation in naming Kuldeep Yadav as his choice as the third spinner while keeping Suryakumar Yadav as a potent middle-order game-changer.

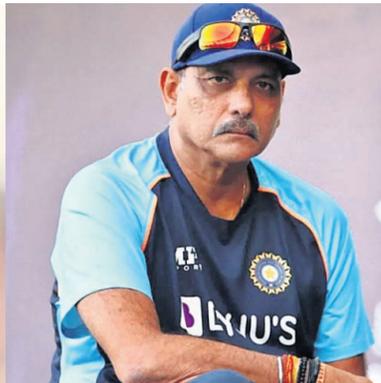
"Ashwin, you don't want him to over-plan. He is good enough to stick to his plans as he is real crucial player here. His form might decide the series. Ashwin comes as a package, he will get you important runs as well," Shastri said, while answering a query from PTI during an interaction organised by Star Sports, the official broadcasters of the Border Gavaskar Trophy.

"If Ashwin is on fire, that might decide the outcome of the series. He is world class in most conditions but in Indian conditions, he is lethal. If the ball starts spinning and there is enough bite off the surface, he will trouble most batters.

"So, you don't want Ashwin to over-think and try too many things. Just keep it there and let the pitch do the rest because as it is, it does enough in India," Shastri, one of the shrewdest brains in Indian cricket, said.

To another query from PTI on his choice as the third spinner, Shastri replied: "As far as third spinner is concerned, I would like to see Kuldeep play straightaway. Jadeja and Axar are pretty similar bowlers. Kuldeep is different. If you lose the toss on Day 1, you need someone who will give it a rip.

"If anyone spins it one Day 1, it will be Kuldeep. If the track doesn't have too much on offer, then Kuldeep can come into play," he also gave another important reason to include Kuldeep in the playing XI. "As the game progresses with the fast bowlers the Australians have, the rough created on both



Shastri said.

Shastri is confident that Virat Kohli's near 50 average in Tests against Australia will spur him on and if he gets going in the first couple of innings, he would spell doom for the Australians.

"His (Kohli's) record against Australia would spur him on. He would be charged up and want to start well. You should look at his first two innings. If he gets off to a start, he would be a thorn in flesh for Aussies. They would, for sure, won't want that to happen. Kohli has average of just under 50 against Australia. Amazing record, that should really get him going."

Rishabh Pant's absence would really hurt India and Shastri admitted that one tough call would be whether to choose a better batter in Ishan Kishan or a relatively safer keeper in KS Bharat.

"That's a tough call for India. That's how important Pant is. He ticked all boxes. Not only did his keeping improved but he could get under the skin of the opposition. As a batter, he is so dangerous. Pant has played more match-winning knocks than any of our top five batters in recent times. So that's how big a blow it is."

As far as the choice between Kishan and Bharat, Shastri said, "If the pitch offers turn, the better keeper should play. For Jadeja, Kuldeep and Ashwin, they would need good keeper behind stumps. Now it is up to you, who do you think is a better keeper."

sides of the track will come into play. So wrist-spinners can get the ball to turn back in and out both ways."

Shastri is unapologetic when asked about the kind of track he would want. "I want the ball to turn from Day 1. Lose the toss, so be it. Something there on offer from Day 1, playing at home, cash in on it."

Shastri reckoned that India

should keep their 12 ready with Shubman Gill in the scheme of things and then decide looking at the conditions of the track. He doesn't want Surya to be ruled out from the playing XI as a quick 40 on a rank turner from him could be a potential game-changer.

"Tough choice. You have to pick the best player for that position (No.5). Surya is one player who

will be proactive and looking to rotate the strike.

"If you want to do well in India, you have got to rotate the strike and not let bowlers bowl maidens at you. Blocking won't help. A quick 30 or 40 could decide the fate of game. He (Surya) can get (the runs) quickly and disrupt the opposition. India should back themselves to win by two-match margin,"

India really going to miss Pant: Chappell

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Nagpur, Feb 6: Former captain Ian Chappell feels Rishabh Pant's presence would have given sleepless nights to Australia captain Pat Cummins but even then India would start firm favourites in the upcoming four-match Test series beginning here Thursday.

Pant met with a horrific car accident in December last year and is yet to be discharged from the hospital after undergoing multiple surgeries on his knee and heel.

"India are really going to really miss Rishabh Pant. The Australians will be happy. He is a counter attacker, the guy who keep you awake are guys who score quickly and changes game in one session. Pant was one such player," Chappell said during an interaction organised by Star Sports, the official broadcasters of the Test series for the Border Gavaskar Trophy.

Chappell, one of the most respected voices in world cricket, feels that R Ashwin will certainly be the biggest threat but the Australia batters need to be proactive against him.

"Why is Ashwin likely to be the threat? Because he is a smart cricketer. Ashwin will always be a problem. Now, if you let him bowl the way he wants to bowl, you are in trouble. He will be a threat to Australia throughout. They have got to be proactive," Chappell said.

"You got to be thinking about being proactive. If you are not dictating terms, then you are in trouble. You have to get singles and rotate the strike. He (Ashwin) then has to change (his strategy against) whom he is bowling to then."

Nathan Lyon, with 400-plus Test wickets, knows how to bowl in India but Chappell would ideally like the wily off-spinner to also get his deliveries to drift away from right-handers. Chappell then explained Lyon's methods.

"You judge Lyon by how many runs are right handers scoring against him on the on-side. If there are lot of singles, doubles, fours being scored on on side by right handers, then he is bowling too straight.

"One thing that Lyon could try and do better is to curve the ball away from right handers. Really good off-spinners curve the ball away from right handers and that opens up opportunities for batters to hit on the off side. And then when you turn it back in, you get the chance to get bowled, bat-pad, leg before," he further explained.

"For India, it is important that they don't let Lyon dominate them. If Lyon dominates, it becomes easy for Pat Cummins to rotate his fast bowlers and he doesn't have to bowl both speedsters from both ends." Chappell is dead against the idea of Australia playing Ashton Agar as the second spinner just because he is a handy lower order batter.



Barca open 8-point lead in La Liga



STUNNING SHOW: Jordi Alba and Raphinha wheel away in celebration after the former's goal Sunday, while a Sevilla player (blurred) hides his face in disappointment

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, Feb 6: Barcelona took advantage of Real Madrid's stumble to kick off the second half of the season with another win and enjoy their biggest lead so far at the top of the Spanish league.

After Madrid's 0-1 loss at Mallorca, Barcelona extended its

10-game winning streak in all competitions with a comfortable 3-0 victory over Sevilla Sunday to open an eight-point lead over Madrid after 20 of 38 rounds.

It is the biggest lead by any team this season, putting the Catalan club in firm control as they chase their first league title since 2018-19. Jordi Alba, Gavi and Raphinha

scored a goal each in the second half to give Barcelona their fifth straight victory in the league. The last game Barcelona failed to win was a 1-1 league draw against Espanyol last year.

Sevilla, who got off to a surprisingly awful start to the season, were coming off two straight league wins that had helped it move

further away from the relegation zone. They dropped to 16th place with the loss, two points from the drop zone. Sevilla haven't won in 15 league matches against Barcelona, and in 20 straight visits to the Catalan club.

Barcelona captain Sergio Busquets had to be replaced eight minutes into the match at Camp Nou with an apparent ankle sprain.

SOCIEDAD STALL

Real Sociedad missed a chance to move within three points of Madrid after losing 0-1 to Valladolid at home. It was the third winless game for the Basque Country club after a nine-game winning streak in all competitions. Sociedad were coming off a 0-1 loss to Barcelona in the quarterfinals of the Copa del Rey, and a 0-0 draw at Madrid in the league.

Newly signed Canadian forward Cyle Larin scored a second-half winner for 13th-place Valladolid, which has won two in a row after five straight losses in all competitions.

STRUGGLING VALENCIA

Valencia's struggles continued with a 0-1 defeat at Girona, a result that extended their losing streak to five matches in all competitions. Valencia have only one win in their last 12 league matches and is sitting just outside the relegation zone. Girona moved to 11th place.

Odisha FC hold Gaurs to keep play-off hopes alive



DIEGO MAURICIO (NO.9)

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 6: A resolute Odisha FC held FC Goa to a 1-1 draw despite being a man down in the final quarter of the game in the ISL here Monday.

First-half goals from Gaurs' Noah Sadaoui (second minute) and Odisha FC's Diego Mauricio (43rd) had set up an interesting second half for the two playoff contenders who will, nonetheless, likely be happy with a result that didn't damage either of their prospects.

FC Goa got off to the perfect start when Sadaoui put them ahead

in the second minute. Alvaro Vazquez picked up the ball in midfield as Odisha FC were looking to push forward, and found Sadaoui with a through ball on the left side of the box.

Odisha FC's defence was spread out and tracking back as the forward found time to compose himself and drive the ball past goalkeeper Amrinder's left hand.

Odisha FC did manage to create the better chances from there on, often from the left with Isak Ralte being their outlet.

FC Goa defended in numbers for the majority of the half, offering very little for the hosts to breach, until Ralte was fouled a few yards outside the box towards the end of the half. Mauricio stepped up to take the resulting free-kick and powered a curler that was too much for Dheeraj Singh leaping to his right.

Odisha FC were forced to slow down their game in the 67th minute, when left-back Sahil Panwar picked up a second yellow card to be ejected from the match for a challenge from behind.

The result put Odisha FC at seventh place with a point behind sixth-ranked Bengaluru FC, while FC Goa remain in fourth. Odisha FC stay at home to face Hyderabad FC Friday while FC Goa head back home to meet Mumbai City FC Saturday.

Mumbai to host inaugural WPL March 4 to 26

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 6: The much-awaited inaugural season of the Women's Premier League (WPL) will be played from March 4 to 26 in Mumbai.

The Brabourne Stadium and the DY Patil Stadium will host all the matches with the tournament opener expected to be played between Gujarat Giants and Mumbai Indians-owned franchise. "The Women's Premier League will be played from March 4 to 26 in Mumbai," IPL chairman Arun Dhimal told PTI Monday.

The auction will take place Feb 13. Each team will have a purse of ₹12 cr at the players' auction and will need to buy a minimum of 15 players and maximum of 18

Dhimal also confirmed that the auction will take place February 13 in Mumbai, a day after India's T20 World Cup match against Pakistan.

With the five teams fetching Rs 4669.99 crore and the BCCI selling the media rights for Rs 951 crore, the WPL is the second biggest T20 League in the world behind the IPL.

Apart from three IPL team owners - Mumbai Indians, Royal Challengers Bangalore and Delhi Capitals - Capri Global Holdings (Lucknow) and the Adani Sportsline have bought the five franchises. Around 1500 players have registered for the league and the final list is expected to be released later this week.

Each team will have a purse of Rs 12 crore at the players' auction next month and will need to buy a minimum of 15 players and maximum of 18. Up to five overseas players, including one from associate member country, will be allowed in the playing eleven.

A total of 22 games will be played in the inaugural season with the top-ranked team in the league stage qualifying directly for the final. The second and third placed teams will battle out for a place in the title clash.

Man City accused of breaching EPL financial rules

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, Feb 6: Manchester City was accused by the Premier League on Monday of breaching a slew of financial rules from 2009-18, during which the club became a force in English and European soccer following its takeover by Abu Dhabi's ruling family.

The league released a long statement detailing a list of alleged breaches of regulations by City after a four-year investigation, covering a period when the team won three Premier League titles - in 2012, 2014 and 2018.

City, the defending league champion, is accused of failing to provide "accurate financial information

that gives a true and fair view of the club's financial position" 2009-18 or give "full details of manager remuneration in its relevant contracts" from 2009-13. Roberto Mancini was manager during that period.

Other alleged offenses include failure to comply with UEFA regulations from 2013-18, Premier League profitability and sustainability rules from 2015-18 and to assist with the league's investigation from December 2018 to the present day.

The league said it has referred the breaches to an independent commission ahead of a confidential hearing. City hasn't responded to a request for comment from The Associated Press.



City could be at risk of severe punishment. The Premier League's rule book gives a disciplinary commission powers to impose a range

of sanctions plus the wider scope of "such other penalty as it shall think fit."

A large fine seems inevitable if

the charges are proven. Also in play is a point deduction, a title nullified or even being expelled from the league, according to league rules.

While City was under investigation by the Premier League, the club had a two-year ban from European club competitions overturned by the Court of Arbitration for Sport in 2020 after UEFA ruled City committed "serious breaches" of financial fair play regulations from 2012-16.

City was not fully cleared of wrongdoing, though the court said some of the allegations were not proven or could not be judged because of a statute of limitations in UEFA rules.

The court also fined City 10 mil-

lion euros (then USD 11.3 million) for failing to cooperate with investigators. The club's "blatant disregard" should be "strongly condemned," the court's judges said.

City has been transformed into an English soccer power in the decade since being bought by Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, a deputy prime minister of the United Arab Emirates and a member of Abu Dhabi's royal family.

Under its Abu Dhabi ownership, City - which previously lived in the shadow of neighbor Manchester United - has won six Premier League titles, two FA Cups and six English League Cups. It has been the most successful period in the club's 143-year history.